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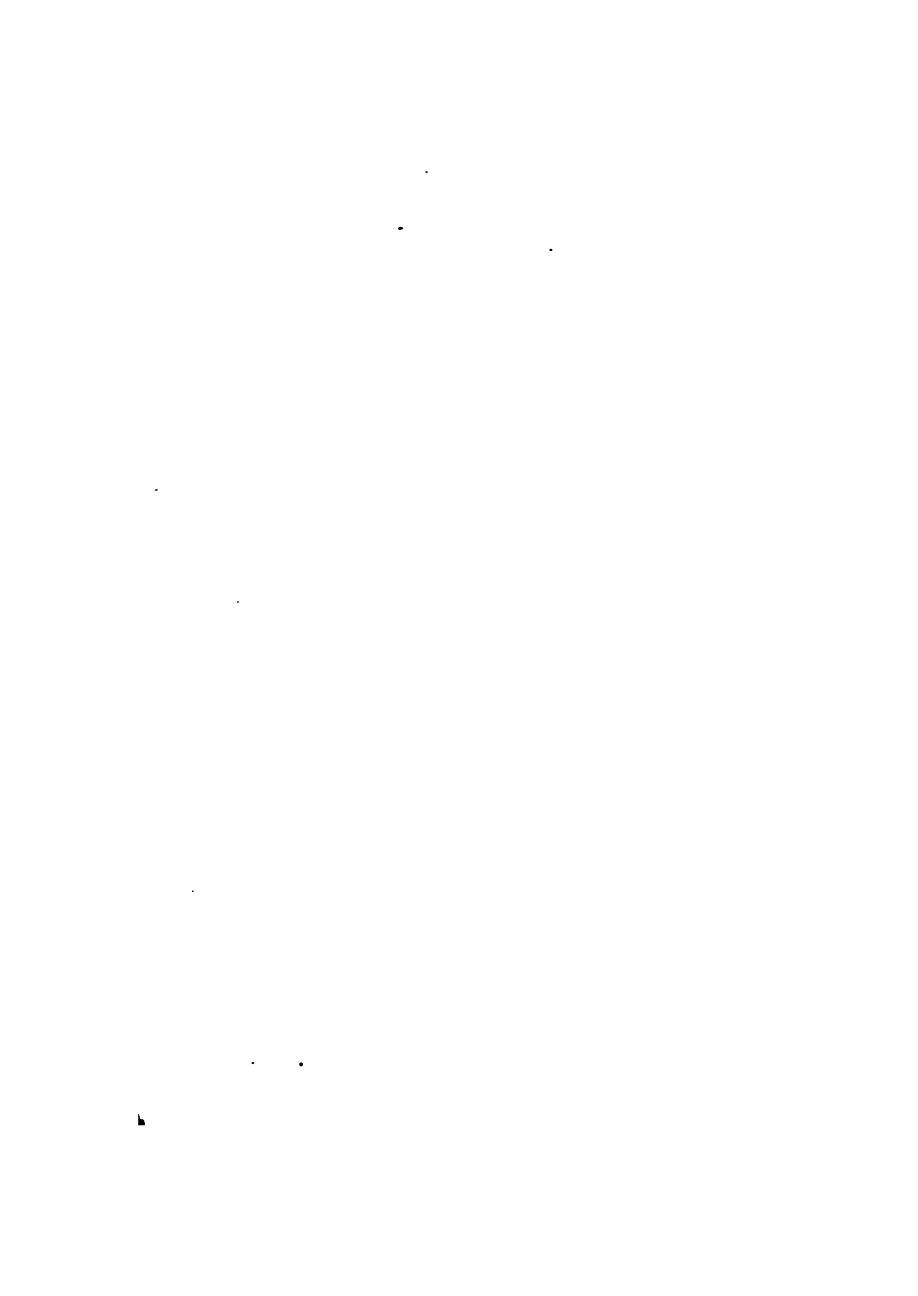
OF

THE GREAT CANAL.

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MDCCLXIX.



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THE SUEZ CANAL.

I.

HAVING received the honour of an invitation from the Viceroy, to witness and describe the splendid ceremonies of which the Desert and the shores of the Mediterranean and the Red Sea are about to be the scene, it may be useful if we preface accounts of those ceremonies with as much narrative and explanation as may conduce to understanding the magnitude and nature of the enterprise, the completion of which is to be celebrated with all the magnificence that East and West can supply.

The grand result or use of the Suez Canal is, that it shortens the distance from the West to the East, from Europe to India, by more than a half—from about 15,000 miles to about 7000 miles. To save a distance of 8000 miles between two points is surely one of the most stupendous material objects which human effort could set itself to accomplish, and, tremendous as have already been the sacrifices and the costs of the achievement, and great as are the risks and uncertainties of its future, it is almost impossible to imagine any amount of sacrifices and risks which would not be justified and compensated by the accomplishment of an object so vast not only in its material

but its moral benefits to mankind. One fact, however, deducts somewhat from the splendour of the triumph, and another brings to our own country some amount of humiliation. A work the same in object, though on a different scale, was executed by the ancients about 2500 years ago, and existed for fifteen centuries. This brings the reflection that, even in things material and mechanical, the progress of modern times and Western countries has not been so enormous, compared with ancient times and with the East, as is perhaps too universally and complacently assumed. Nor is there much comfort in the knowledge that the work of the ancients went to ruin a thousand years ago, apparently through the agency of human violence ; for that, like many other things in the history of the East, admonishes us that mankind may retrograde, and also seems to reproach modern nations, especially those holding the rule and the trade of the far East, with having permitted so many centuries to elapse without an effort or even an idea directed towards the restoration of what had been lost. For us British, we have to remember, in some sorrow, that, while no nation has a greater interest in, or is likely to receive larger benefits from, what has been done, it has, to a very large extent in fact, and to a still larger extent in form and appearance, been done not only without our aid but against our will. Palmerston, one of our greatest statesmen, and Robert Stephenson, one of our most famous engineers, opposed it—the former on professedly engineering and economical grounds, but undoubtedly on political motives, the latter on the grounds that

it could not be made, and, if it were made, could not be preserved. And, beyond denial, those opinions prevailed among both the political and the commercial public—neither of them indeed either did or could take active measures of opposition, but both looked askance. More than half of the shares are held in France, nearly a fourth in Egypt, an eighth in Austria, a sixteenth in Russia, and only one-eightieth part in Britain and the United States respectively. All this, however, must be taken with some explanations and deductions. All of us were not wrong, and such of us as were wrong are not yet proved to have been so far wrong as our neighbours are fond of representing. In Scotland particularly, the mercantile public were very far from being generally or decidedly hostile—for instance, the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce was one of the earliest and staunchest supporters of the project; and we see no good reason for omitting to mention that this journal, amidst much temptation to the contrary, often and elaborately maintained that the plan was mechanically practicable and politically safe, and even that the opposition of our politicians and engineers was a national discredit. Still more, it has to be taken into account that some of the evil predictions, such as the insufficiency of the estimated cost, have been justified, and that others, such as the permanent unremunerativeness, and the destruction of works by natural causes, have not yet been tested, and especially that, as shall afterwards be explained, the chief of the commercial and some of the engineering objections or doubts

were really sound in the then circumstances, though subsequent inventions and ~~other~~ changes have now rendered the former data obsolete. These are large deductions from the fact that, as a nation, we opposed and foreboded—still enough of that fact remains to reduce us to an humble, if not a humiliating, position in the gorgeous pomps and rejoicings which are about to startle the conquered desert.

Excepting for the purposes of reminding us that there is nothing entirely new under the sun, of increasing the wonder and admiration with which we are bound to regard the ancient people and dynasties of Egypt, and of supplying a contrast between ancient and modern means and appliances in the department of mechanics, there is little use in referring to that canal which, almost before the dawn of history, accomplished, on a scale sufficient for the wants of the time, what has now been accomplished again. There is adequate evidence that, about 600 years before Christianity came into the world, the Egyptians had constructed a water communication between the Mediterranean and the Red Seas, sufficient to allow ships probably of the largest size then known to pass through from Europe to India. It is true that this was not effected by an artificial canal throughout the whole distance, but by using the Nile to the utmost point available ; but something of the same kind may be said of the great modern Canal, which, for the greater part of its course, takes its route through natural lakes. The construction of this work occupied a hundred years. The greater work of M. Lesseps has been accomplished in ten years. There are two causes for wonder here.

Wonderful is the difference between the mechanical means at the command of the ancients and the moderns respectively, enabling a French engineer to accomplish a work four times greater in one-tenth of the time compared with the utmost efforts of the Pharaohs and all their hosts. But more wonderful still is the thought that, thousands of years before steam or almost any other of our great mechanical agencies had existence, such a work as the ancient canal between the Nile and the Red Sea could have been accomplished or even conceived. There is another reflection suggested by the history of this canal, which received too little weight during the controversies raised by the proposals in our own day, now realised, and which ought to go far towards allaying the chief fears as to the future. The ancient canal was in use for many centuries, and is supposed to have been destroyed in the end only by barbaric violence. It seems indeed also to be true that, several times before its obstruction or abandonment, it was sanded up; but that seems to have arisen chiefly from sloth, carelessness, or anarchy, and whenever there was internal tranquillity, with moderately vigorous rulers, little difficulty appears to have been experienced in restoring it to use. If the ancients, with their imperfect knowledge and comparatively contemptible means, could thus keep their canal from being permanently filled up by the drifting sands, can there be imminent danger from that and similar quarters to a work in charge of those possessing both experience and power so far transcending? It is quite possible, however,

to overrate the amount of safety, by taking false or insufficient data. Thus, too much is made of the falsification of the predictions about the railway through the same region being sanded over : people are apt to forget that, while the sand drifted on a railway has a chance or a certainty of being drifted away again, every grain of sand drifted upon the surface of a canal must of necessity sink and remain. The sand, we have a misgiving, will yet prove the chief danger of the Suez Canal, though not so much in the shape of filling up by drift as by the gradual falling in of the embankments caused by the commotion or "wash" inseparable from navigation between strait limits, which it has not been found practicable to do more than partially face with stone.

Before the beginning of the century, the idea of connecting the two seas by a canal navigable for sea-going vessels had engaged the attention of several French engineers, all, or almost all, of whom had been set at work by General Buonaparte, when he was in military possession of Egypt. At that period, the idea was abandoned, partly through the French being dispossessed in Egypt, partly through a gross engineering blunder showing the difference of level between the two seas to be upwards of 30 feet, whereas, as subsequent inquiries, especially one by a mixed British, French, and Austrian Commission in 1847, showed, it is not so much as 3 inches. Nearly forty years ago, M. de Lesseps, then apparently French Consul at Cairo, got his mind filled with *the idea at which he has laboured ever since, and has now splendidly realised.* A radical

difference between M. de Lesseps' plan, and that of his predecessors, ancient and modern, was, that he sought no aid from the Nile, but proposed to proceed by the nearest and of course most direct practicable line between the two most closely approaching parts of the two seas. For the history of the time between the conception and the actual commencement of the work, we draw on a pamphlet by the Chevalier de Stoers, Bavarian Consul at Liverpool, who knows much about the whole matter, and says it with the utmost possible clearness and brevity:—

“In 1847, a man of incontestable talent, Le Père Enfantin, was greatly impressed with the project, and inspired some of his friends with his own enthusiasm; and a commission of eminent engineers, including the English engineer, Stephenson, the Austrian engineer, De Negrelli, the French engineer, Paulin Talabot, and M. Bourdaloue, an experimental operator, assembled, and proved, by levels taken with the most scrupulous care, that the difference between the levels of the two seas was not more than a few inches. These experiments were tested in 1853, by order of the Viceroy, by Linant Bey, a French engineer, and his operations confirmed them.

“These results showed that a direct canal between the two seas was perfectly feasible. M. P. Talabot, without including the creation of ports of access at the extremities, projected a canal to be alimented by the waters of the Nile, the execution of which would have been a matter of chance at certain points, and, at the same time, probably more costly than the excavation of a direct maritime canal. Moreover, at the low-water season of the Nile, it would have been impossible to retain sufficient water to ensure a continued navigation by this route. It is not necessary to refer to it further, except to remark that the researches made for it have also assisted in the solution of the question.

“In 1854, Mohamed Said Pacha, the son of Mehemet Ali, ascended the throne, and at once sent for M. de Lesseps, who had then, for some five years, retired from his office, and had spent that time in maturing his project for a direct canalisation of the Isthmus. M. de Lesseps, on receipt of the Viceroy's communication,

left at once for Egypt, and had no trouble in convincing Saïd Pacha of the greatness and importance of the undertaking. On the 30th November 1854, the first act of a commission, signed at Cairo, charged M. de Lesseps to constitute and direct a company, named the 'The Universal Maritime Suez Canal Company,' for the excavations, and working of the canal for ninety-nine years from the date of the junction of the two seas. The necessary land for the foundation of the ports, the formation of the encampments, workshops, &c., and for the canal itself, was all conceded at the same time and for the same period.

"In April, 1855, M. de Lesseps handed to the Viceroy the reports of the engineers Linant Bey and Mougel Bey, which constituted the first draft of the projected scheme, and an international commission, composed of eminent men representing France, England, Austria, Spain, Italy, Holland, and Prussia, assembled in Paris, and proceeded to Egypt to examine and compare this first draft of the scheme on the spot.

"The report of this commission, dated in 1856, is an admirable work. After having explored the whole country, the commission decided in favour of the creation of a canal between the two seas—a canal without sluices, and without other works of art than the ports of access. The commission, moreover, declared the project to be feasible, at an expenditure of 200 millions of francs, or eight millions sterling; and the probable cost was well considered in all its details.

"In 1858, after two years of conferences and preliminary steps of all kinds, M. de Lesseps opened a subscription to furnish the necessary funds. Notwithstanding the fears of an impending war, the greater part of the capital required was subscribed in a few days. There were great numbers of subscribers in most of the nations of Europe, but more particularly in France, which counts more than 20,000 shareholders. The Viceroy decided to take for Egypt the balance of the subscription, and the management was speedily in a position to proceed with the execution of the work."

Previous to the last-mentioned date, M. de Lesseps had brought his project under the consideration of the public, and especially the commercial public, of this country, with limited *success*. Somehow there was a general suspicion of *French* political motive, of engineering

quackery, and of financial looseness. It is pleasant now to remember that, among the public bodies which had confidence in the scheme, the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce was conspicuous, if not foremost. On 15th July 1857, the Chamber, on the motion of Mr George Harrison, seconded by our late Lord Provost, Mr Lawson, unanimously resolved to petition Parliament to show all possible countenance to the scheme, as practicable in itself, and as promising great advantages to the commerce of this country and of the world. Mr Harrison, in his speech, declared that "the object was proved to be perfectly practicable, and capable of being carried out for a mere trifle"—which was perhaps putting the case a trifle too strong, and exhibiting Mr Harrison as just a little too far in advance of the age. About the same date, the *Scotsman*, referring to an answer made by Lord Palmerston to a question put in the House of Commons, said—"The opposition of the British Government to this great work is now avowed, and is based on views which can scarcely escape being condemned as short-sighted and illiberal." And again—"The objections which obviously weighed most with Lord Palmerston were those suggested by the selfish interests of Britain—1st, the Suez Canal would enable the States of Southern Europe to make shorter voyages to the Indian seas than we could; and, 2dly, in some future war, France might seize Egypt, and shut the Canal against us. As to the first objection, we showed its unreasonableness in a former article"—and then we proceeded to show the unreasonableness of the second objection. It strikes us as just possible that we

must have been more cosmopolitan and less ardently if not blindly patriotic in those days than in these. But if we then erred on the cosmopolitan side, we have the consolation of reflecting that the error did not spread. Those who supported the project were in a small minority among us—and M. de Lesseps went on without and in spite of “the British public.”

The year 1860 was nearly closed before the preparations were sufficiently advanced to enable a commencement to be made by the workmen. These soon amounted to about 30,000—a number several times greater than the whole ordinary population of the isthmus to be intersected. For some time, 25,000 labourers were supplied by the Viceroy, according to the original stipulation ; and there is unfortunately sufficient reason to classify that aid as “forced labour”—labour which would not have been rendered voluntarily, and which, though paid, was not paid its value. After a time, the Viceroy, probably somewhat in deference to the public opinion of Europe, and especially of England, but also in jealousy of the influence which the Company was acquiring over the natives, resiled from his engagement as to the supply of labour ; and, on the award of the Emperor of the French, paid about £3,000,000 in lieu of fulfilment. The providing for the necessary hosts of workmen was one of the most arduous and wonderful parts of the undertaking. Not only had whole towns to be built in the desert, but works had to be executed on a national scale for supplying those towns with the most *absolute* necessaries of existence. Thus, water *could only* be got by the construction of a

fresh-water canal, 94 miles in length, which taps the Nile about 50 miles from its mouth, runs eastward to Ismailia about the middle of the Grand Canal, and thence southwards to near Suez, the supply to the northward of Ismailia being conveyed in pipes. From the Nile to Ismailia and southwards, this "sweet-water Canal" has already been used for the passage of small vessels. In short, it was necessary to make two canals, of almost equal length—one for the traffic of the world, the second merely to supply water for domestic uses to the workmen employed in the construction of the first. That single fact, better than any detailed narrative, should convey a true idea of the enormous difficulties of executing such a work in such a region.

The course, dimensions, and uses of the Canal have been so often stated piecemeal, and many of them are now so familiarised by publication in official or business announcements, that the barest mention of them should suffice here. The Suez Canal is nearly 100 miles in length. It runs from Port-Said, on the Mediterranean, about 150 miles east of Alexandria, in a direction at first due south, then tending slightly eastwards, to Suez on the Red Sea. Great cost and difficulty arose at Port-Said, where it has been necessary to erect two piers or breakwaters, one of two miles, the other of one and a-half mile in length. As illustrating the difficulties encountered at this point, look at the facts that the very ground on which the new town stands was sea and had to be made land, and that the stones had to be *artificially manufactured by compounding lime and*

sand, the lime having to be brought from Europe — the sand locally superabundant. One of the great dangers of the Canal—the silting up of the port of outlet by the Mediterranean sand, has already begun to be experienced. The first part of the course of the Canal, beginning at the north, is through a large but shallow lagoon called Lake Mensaleh, which has three communications with the sea through the strip of land on which Port-Said stands. The average depth of this lake is about 6 feet, but varying from 1 to 10 feet; and the plan adopted, implying enormous efforts brought against scarcely less enormous difficulties, was to dredge out a channel of the required depth, and then hem it in with two embankments rising 15 feet above the surface of the water. The Canal then proceeds through two smaller lakes, the soil of them all being very fine sand, which had to be worked through, of course under water, for about 30 miles. The next 25 miles or so are through a region of elevated sand-hills. It then passes through another small lake of the same character as the others, called Timsah—where, instead of cutting out a channel by dredging, the device has been resorted to of filling up the lake itself to the necessary level—and then through another region of sand. At this point, having completed about two-thirds of its course; the Canal enters upon the region known as “the Bitter Lakes,” but which are the beds of ancient lakes, now dried up. There, as at Lake Timsah, the plan adopted is artificially to fill *the beds* of the old lakes with water, and to *indicate the route* of the Canal—i.e., the deeper

part of the channel—by buoys. This part of the course is about twenty-two miles in length. The few remaining miles, about thirteen, from the southern end of the Bitter Lakes to Suez, runs through a rocky region, which presented great obstacles in the construction, but threatens no danger in the maintenance. The difficulties of obtaining perfectly adequate port accommodation at the junction of the Canal with the Red Sea have not yet been overcome. For the latter or southern half of its course, the Canal runs parallel with and at only a short distance from the railway between Alexandria and Suez. For about two-thirds of its entire course, the Canal runs through natural water or old water-channels.

The depth is about 26 feet throughout, which will give admission to vessels of about $24\frac{1}{2}$ feet draught. The width is 72 feet at the bottom of the Canal, and at the surface of the water is about 327 feet for part of the route, and rather less than 200 for the other. The maximum speed to be allowed is $6\frac{1}{4}$ miles, and vessels will make the passage from sea to sea in 16 hours. There are no locks, the average level of the two seas being almost the same, though there is more tide in the Red Sea than in the Mediterranean by about 4 feet—a difference not sufficient to cause any material flow for any considerable portion of the 24 hours in any part of the Canal, and, we should suppose, never affecting any part of it but the few miles between the Bitter Lakes and the Red Sea outlet. The dues to be charged are 10 francs, or about 8s., per ton and per passenger.

In considering the uses or calculating the possible profits of the Canal, two facts require to be taken into account—it will be of no very great avail for passengers, or at least for passengers to and from India; and it will be of comparatively little service to sailing vessels of any considerable tonnage. The railway already supplies the wants of Indian passengers better than the Canal is likely to do. In point of time, the railway will always have a great advantage over the Canal, as Alexandria is reached nearly a day sooner on the route from Europe than Port-Said, and the journey by railway occupies little more than half the time likely to be required by the Canal. All that the Canal can save passengers is transshipment, and to those who have been weeks at sea, and have weeks of sea before them, landing is a pleasure, and a day or two in the famous land of Egypt is a coveted advantage. The difficulty as to sailing vessels is, that they cannot safely navigate the Red Sea, where many of the channels or fairways are too narrow and tortuous to admit of tacking. The traffic through the Canal is likely, therefore, to be confined chiefly to cargo-carrying steamers. That class of vessels, however, is rapidly on the increase, and we are soon likely to see a greatly extended use of vessels using steam only as an auxiliary in a degree and manner suited to overcome the difficulties of the Red Sea navigation.

A main objection of Robert Stephenson and others twenty-five years ago was, that the Canal would not be largely available even for steamers, because a steamer from any British port to Bombay or any Indian port, could not carry coal sufficient for her consumption. This

was to a very great extent true at the time. It was (and is) also true indeed that steamers from this country make the much longer voyage round the Cape, and coal at ports by the way ; but, from particular circumstances, coals at least used to be had very much cheaper on the long than on the short voyage. Sailing vessels to India, round the Cape, taking out finished goods and bringing home raw material, had often not much more than one-third freight on their outward voyages ; and so they filled up with coal, carried at a rate in itself quite unremunerative. It is much the same through many parts of the East—as Java, to which Dutch vessels bring cargoes of bricks for nothing. This advantage was not enjoyed by the short overland route—so that there was a great deal in the objection that the short route was much more impracticable for steamers than the long one. The objection, however, has now lost more than half its force—because steamers do not require now half as much coal as they did when the objection was made. Within these twenty or twenty-five years, there has been an improvement in marine steam-engines, gradual, silent, almost unobserved by the ordinary public, but so great in its results as to amount almost to a revolution in that department of the shipping trade. That improvement was not made at once nor by any one person—it grew slowly, and was tended by several hands. The latest if not also the largest contributions to the result have been made by the firm of Randolph & Elder, of Glasgow. That result is, that steamers fitted with those new engines, in their most improved form, can

obtain equal results by a consumption of coal only one-third or even one-fourth of that required for the unimproved engines. The adoption of those engines is as yet very far from general, largely owing to the unimproved engines with which all but a few existing steamers have been supplied having become unsaleable ; but ere long, steamers as a rule are likely to be propelled at a third of their present or recent cost. It is this which will give the Suez Canal an advantage of which it had neither possession nor prospect when its feasibility was put in question. The advantage, however, may easily be over-rated, at least as to cost. Take, for instance, cotton—likely to be hereafter the chief freight from India to England : probably that commodity will not come home much cheaper by the Canal than by the Cape ; but it will come more quickly—and in such matters time is generally money, and often more than money.

This, however, must be mentioned, that not only the mercantile but the maritime English mind remains immovably of the opinion that the Canal will prove a failure, both as to stability and profit. The officers of the Peninsular and Oriental Company, who ought to know something of the matter, are strong and unanimous in holding this opinion, and it is certain that the Company are not at present contemplating any change in their existing system. In a year or two, either the French shareholders will be poorer, or the British prophets will be wiser, men.

II.

THE EAST—GIBRALTAR.

GIBRALTAR, November 3, 1869.

It is not everybody who falls under the influence of that mysterious feeling to which many persons describe themselves as subject all their lives long, of a yearning towards the East as to their natural home—not less their home because they never saw it, but only, therefore, the more desired to be seen. Doubtless, the East has in its time—or rather in its times, for it has had several times, several decadences and revivals—been the home and birthplace of many great things in civilisation, arts, religion, even commerce ; but those times have long passed away, and some of the greatest of those things have passed away from the East and made their home in the West. “ Westward the course of empire holds its way,” was said a long time, and might have been said a much longer time ago. Moreover, we all say, though a few crotchety philosophers may doubt, that “ Time’s noblest offspring is its last”—that what the West has and is, is better than the East had and was—that the West possesses almost all of the really valuable that ever grew in the East, and, in addition, vast possessions that the East never saw nor conceived. The East may be said to have lost

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almost all of that in which we feel we have a share, and has not replaced it by anything that we should desire. Everything is in stagnation and decay ; even the vigorous barbarisms which swept away the old civilisations are lying sick to death, and (disregarding such exceptional super-inducing of Western ideas and things as has long been in operation in Egypt, and of which the Suez Canal is the chief material fruit) nothing is appearing to take their place. "The East"—the whole social and political system that can be roughly described by that name—is not being pushed from its stool—on the contrary, the West seeks rather to prop it up, at least politically ; it is sinking under its own weight and weakness. There is nothing there, in the social, political, or even religious life, that is ours, or is like to us. There is scarcely even the empty shell which once held precious things—the shell is not empty, but full of all unclean things. There is, therefore, no great difficulty in understanding why a certain proportion of people have never felt drawn towards the East as to a home. If in any sense it can be regarded as a home, it is a desolated and desecrated home. This thing and that thing was born there, but they have long ceased to dwell there. It is indeed natural to desire to see the places where such things were, and had their beginnings—and if people would say that they have a desire for sight-seeing of the highest kind, instead of professing an instinct to go towards the East as if back to a home in which they, or much of that of which they are made up, has its natural abode—as if they felt themselves *only sojourners and pilgrims* in Europe,

whilst their star "hath had elsewhere its setting, and cometh from afar"—it would be more easy to understand, believe, and sympathise. To those to whom sight-seeing of any or all kinds is a pleasure, the East, or even that comparatively accessible portion bordering on the Mediterranean, is, of course, full of the highest interest that can attach to the scenes of some of the greatest events in human history, and to the remains of some of the greatest works of human hands. There are the proofs and monuments of more than one high and complex civilisation which existed countless years, and even countless ages, before the West began to emerge from barbarism—the gigantic and mysterious records of antiquities which had become hoar and mysterious before our antiquity began. There, too, are the birth-places of three out of the four or five great religions of mankind—Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Mecca. But is it always improving and elevating—does it even always escape being deteriorating and disenchanting—to see in their reality the places famous, glorious, and especially sacred in history? Some places are better, as well as easier, imagined than seen; and among these things are to be reckoned very many made famous by mere antiquity, or by having been the scene of great events. Thus, to take a homely illustration, a man learns something and sees much by visiting Staffa, but he knows no more and understands no better about the ruins of Iona by seeing them—what has been written and drawn teaches him much more than he can learn by sight. Many travellers confess this truth, especially as to the

East, and many more would confess it if they were not afraid of being called coarse and literal. Thackeray went from Cornhill to Cairo and found all barren, and wrote a book to that effect, though not with that purpose. In that often clever and amusing failure, he may be detected almost ceaselessly striving after "raptures conjured up, to serve occasions of poetic pomp," and as constantly betraying an illimitable preference of Cornhill over Cairo. When he ought to be most impressed and impressive, he loses patience with his subject and himself, and, after half-hearted attempts to rise to the occasion, condenses all he has to say into—"The Pyramids are very big," which had been said before, as indeed had everything that can be said on the subject, including many things not much more striking or enlightening. Similar feelings evidently pressed upon Kinglake, as seen in his brilliant "Eothen," through which runs, not more than half-hid, a tone of disappointment and jeer. It is notorious, though not often confessed to the public, that people really do not come back from Palestine with their faith enlarged or their piety elevated—the ugliness and shabbiness of the places otherwise sanctified to the mind, the lying, and squabbling, and squalor, and sordidness investing the holiest places of the Holy Land, make many a Christian regret that, having had a vision of his own, he has come so far only rudely to undo it. Again, comparatively few as have been the specimens of Eastern men and things that have been seen in the West, they have been enough, *joined* with some of the published and many of *the unpublished* confessions of travellers, to

produce among those who may, if you like, be called the vulgar, a vague impression of the East as somewhat fitting Smollett's description of a typical Frenchman—"all silks and scents above, all rags and rottenness below"—glitter and misery, splendour and vermin, ill-smelling garments and dirty embroidery. Doubtless these, too, are wrong—even more wrong than those who dream of "the gorgeous East" as all and only gorgeous.

There are people who, to satisfy themselves as to the truth in such matters—to judge whether some of the most famous places on the earth are worth seeing as well as knowing—would not care to stir from the home where their lot has been cast, and who utterly disown all consciousness of any sort of call to another home in the East. Home-keeping youths (and seniors), proverbially if not notoriously, have homely wits—hence doubtless the low view taken of such matters by such people. But, nevertheless, there are people so lost to every sense of shame as openly to avow the doctrine, "Peebles for pleasure"—people who, if left to the freedom of their own low tastes, would rather, from the Eildons or from "Whitelaw Kips",

"Look over hill and vale,
Over Tweed's fair flood, and Mertoun's wood,
And all down Teviotdale"—

than be looked down upon by "forty centuries" from the Pyramids of Egypt. But even people who never "languished for the purple seas," may go forth to seek them, not because they long to see them, but because they desire for a time to *cease seeing familiar things*—and many such

people are to be found going to and fro in the East, and on the roads to it. If the fine gold have become dim—if cheerful hopes have withered, and sweet memories have been made bitter—if pursued and shadowed by a merciless grief, forbidding either rest or joy—

“Then waft me from the harbour mouth,
Wild wind! I seek a brighter sky,
And I will see before I die
The palms and temples of the South.”

To see these, there is but one course left open to people of this country, to whom either time or money has any value—they must put themselves into the hands of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company. That Company, indeed, gives a choice of two routes—the quickest and dearest by Marseilles, the slowest and least dear by Southampton and Gibraltar; and besides the matter of time, an important consideration in making a choice is on which side the balance lies between six extra days of the risk of sea-sickness, and the fatigue and cost of a long railway journey and three transshipments. At this season this year, when the attraction of the opening of the Suez Canal happens to arise during the favourite season for travelling to India, both routes are crowded. The steamer that left Southampton at the most convenient time for the visitors to Egypt, carried about 160 passengers—as comely and courteous a company as ever was brought together by good chance, though made up of all ranks and conditions, tribes, and tongues—nobles and nobodies, blacks and whites, merry and sad—and carried them with all the comforts and luxuries of *the most superbly appointed hotel*. To describe

the voyage would be to describe an every-week event. It is extremely interesting and even pleasant to those who can keep their appetites and senses. This, of course, the ladies cannot or will not do. They seem to come aboard with the intention of being sick, and they are sick. A considerable number, indeed, hold up till, on the second day, we sight Cape Ushant, and they are told that that is the entrance to the Bay of Biscay. To be sick in that famous or infamous place is apparently regarded as the proper thing; and the proper thing—"The Bay of Biscay, O! O! O!"—is immediately set about on all sides—including the windward side, which is not fair—though there is really less sea, or, at least, less motion of the vessel, than in an ordinary passage from Granton to Burntisland. This is the more to be regretted, as, if the ladies had only waited till the next evening, when a gale rose as we neared Cape Finisterre, they might have been sick more reasonably, if not more effectually. Doubtless, it is a dreadful malady sea-sickness, and the sufferings which some women endure from it render it one far past joking; but experience proves that it might to a very great extent be escaped by a little mental resolution, and by acting on the Dombeyan maxim, "make an effort." The third day the ladies reappear in considerable force, some of them sadly deteriorated, others looking purified by suffering. The sky brightens, the water grows smooth and blue, and the firmament by both day and night tells that we have entered, and every hour are entering farther, into the Sunny South. Dresses and tempers grow gayer; there are all sorts

of ingenious "out-of-door" games before dinner; cards, chess, and backgammon after tea; and plenty of flirting before and after both. New countries and famous places are passed at no great distance—that is Spain, then Portugal, then Spain again. At sunset, we near the romantic rock-islands called the Berlengas—much resembling at a distance some of the rock scenery of Skye. By night we pass the lighthouse on Cintra, so long a hateful sound to English ears, and soon after see the lights of the Tagus, and suppose that that flaring spot in the sky is the reflection from Lisbon. Early on a splendid morning we round Cape St Vincent, and talk of Jervis; in a few hours more, we shall see Trafalgar, and talk of Nelson; yet a few more, and we shall see the British flag flying, and hear the sunrise gun fired from Gibraltar, and shall talk of Elliot, and shall come to the conclusion (indeed we have settled it all already, in spite of the silent, solitary protest of one sallow passenger, who is suspected to be a Frenchman, or worse) that what we won in fair fight, it is our right and everybody's true interest that we should keep. "They shall not have Gibraltar, no;" we won it, we kept it, and we shall keep it—that is the sentiment; and even if it were not sound in itself, there is nobody with soul so base as to dispute it in sight of that stupendous scene of British glory and symbol of British power. To talk of giving up Gibraltar may be easy at Manchester, but seems blasphemous in presence of that proud strength, and of all the memories it awakes.

Yet the first and more distant view of Gibralt-

tar from the Bay is not imposing, or rather it is singularly imposing, in the sense of being deceptive. When first sighted from the Bay, it does not look higher, grander, nor steeper than Dumbarton; and there are on board patriotic Scotchmen eager to maintain Dumbarton as in every way superior. But such of these as went to the top of the Rock—about 1500 feet from the base—over sharp stones and under a blazing sun, came back with the confession that Gibraltar “dings Dumbarton,” and had almost *dang* them—brought to humiliation and candour by a rougher process than that which led the exceptionally candid Aberdonian to admit that St Paul’s made “a clean fule o’ the kirk o’ Fittie.” The ascent is really a severe piece of work—several soldiers, who were interrogated by the way, were emphatic in declaring that they had never gone to the top, and never “meant to.” The view from the top, or rather from the ruin called O’Hara’s Tower, which is higher than the so-called top bearing the flag-staff, is one of the finest in the world. Casting your eyes downwards, you gaze over a sheer precipice of 1500 feet into the light blue water, into whose clear depths you seem to see as far as is the distance from the summit to the surface. Turning your head from the giddy downward gaze, as, notwithstanding its fascinations, all but very strong heads are soon glad to do, you look round upon the white houses, and green gardens, and bristling batteries, with regiments standing in squares, and looking no bigger than a yard of red cloth, and, circling all, the brilliant blue sea, with a fleet of merchantmen basking

motionless in the Bay. You are standing on the furthestmost point of Europe—those bleak hills, with scarcely a house to be seen upon them (fewer than you see on the hills of Inverness or Ross), but dotted at wide intervals with towns glittering white in the sun, are in Andalusia, and far in the distance is the famous Bay of Cadiz ; but those black mountains close at hand are Africa, their gloomy aspect and clinging mists according with vague preconceived ideas of that land of darkness. Art is still aiding nature, which had already done so much, in making or keeping Gibraltar a great fortress. Coming into the harbour, and being stared at in front and on both sides by cannon, standing at every angle and elevation, here from batteries built of enormous strength, and there from holes cut in the rock, and communicating with “galleries” in the very bowels of the mountain, it seems impossible that any moving thing could approach unwelcomed without being overwhelmed with destruction. But there are manifest signs of alertness in appreciating the fact that what was impregnable may some day be rendered impotent by the advances of science. Not only have Armstrong guns almost everywhere supplanted the old artillery, but the mounting of these on the ordinary plan has been lately stopped, with the intention, it is understood, of introducing the Moncrieff or pit system. There is a talk also to the effect that the increased power of artillery would enable some of the batteries to be enfiladed from a point on Spanish soil called “the Queen’s *chair*,” and that alterations to ward off that

danger will soon be entered upon. The view of the Rock from the Mediterranean or southern side, where nature has provided sufficient defences, realises all previous conceptions of the stern grandeur of the place, and suggests that it was designed to act as the gate to one of the great water highways of the world—from which the transition is easy to the conclusion that none are so well qualified to keep the gate as those who are at present in possession. In the town of Gibraltar itself, it is not easy to find any expression or indication of wounded national feeling in regard to the British occupation ; and if it be said that the people of Gibraltar feel a benefit from the occupation in the expenditure of a large sum of British money—as is implied in the maintenance of a garrison of 5000 or 6000 men—and therefore cannot be expected to feel as other Spaniards feel, it has also to be said that they, and they alone, daily witness and feel whatever there is of humiliation. It is part of their daily life. The street (for there may be said to be only one) of Gibraltar is a wonderful sight to those not satiated by travel—the handsome Spanish men, wasting in sloth and trifling the splendid physical gifts which nature has unworthily bestowed on them ; the dark-eyed, melancholy Spanish women, passing slowly out and in at the church doors ; the pushing and roguish-looking Greeks ; the Jew, dirty, despised, and prosperous ; the Turk, with his handsome face, dignified gait, and the dress which the untravelled associate with the idea of a Sultan or Caliph, but often made incongruous and ludicrous by carrying in his hand a fowl or a fish for sale

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or home consumption—all go to make up a striking though imperfect epitome of Europe, Africa, and Asia. But the predominating element is British—the very names of the streets are English; almost everything seems to be designed for the supply of English wants and tastes; English men of English horses are made way for by the crowd; the union-jack is floating over all, and “God save the Queen” is sounding from the parade-ground. This the Spaniards of Gibraltar have to see and bear—

“Pride in their port, defiance in their eye,
They see the lords of human-kind pass by.”

But they see also that these lords have defiance only for their enemies, and that they seek to lord it over no man nor territory beyond the barren rock, which is trodden only by themselves.

In the Mediterranean, the voyagers eastwards soon and for long intervals lose sight of land, and so lose an object of much interest and of great use in conversation. But even the sea and the sky are new, and the internal resources are considerable; whilst the contrast between the scene and our own employments is often amusing and even striking. Rushing through the Mediterranean, under the brilliant star-light of the south, and in a temperature higher than a Scotch July, we hear suddenly rise from a chorus of young ladies, “Ye banks and braes o’ bonnie Doon.” Then comes Sunday morning, and, just as we are bowling along past the piratical shores of Tunis, where we can almost see the ruins of Carthage, a Bible and *prayer-book* are laid on the union-jack, spread

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over the capstan. All hands, crew and passengers alike, are mustered aft ; the captain reads the English Church service, and three hundred people from far and various countries, of a faith which came not into the world for centuries after the sentence "Delenda est Carthago" had been fulfilled, kneel on the deck, and send up prayers both for loved ones at home and for those that go down to the sea in ships. The scene was one better fitted than mere ordinary church-going to impress on the mind the good and beauty of assembling ourselves together.

III.

VOYAGING EASTWARDS—ALEXANDRIA.

ALEXANDRIA, November 13, 1869.

It is not to be denied, especially by those who have tried, that a long sea voyage, even under the most auspicious circumstances—pleasant companions, smooth seas, and smiling skies—has some inevitable tedium. Those who have not tried, and especially those unblessed or uncursed with leisure on shore, are apt to conclude that what others have learned to speak of as wearisome, they will find a golden opportunity for reading, writing, thinking, each in its turn and as inclination prompts, and not, as usual, under the goad of necessity. But that delusion soon vanishes, at least if you journey towards the sun. The sea air, or the heat, one or other, or both, produce a lassitude of both mind and body which, even to those naturally and usually energetic, renders exertion difficult, and idleness tolerable, though yet not quite enjoyable. Very little reading induces drowsiness; very little writing slides into twaddle—as witness. It may seem easy at least to rest; to remain at peace, while contemplation

“plumes her feathers and lets grow her wings,
That, in the various bustle of resort,
Were all too ruffled, and sometimes impaired.”

Many people but irritate themselves by *deliberate* efforts to sink into vacancy. Then

all the games and other resources of the deck—including that weary pacing thereof which many of both sexes industriously pursue the whole day, though the process is as monotonous and the results not so profitable as the pacing of the treadmill—grow more difficult and burdensome. As the voyage lengthens the heat strengthens—as the skies and the seas grow fairer the atmosphere grows more oppressive or at least less enjoyable, and the European feels more and more every day that he is no longer in the home of his race, and must adopt the habits and the garb of other climates. There is, it is true, something gladdening as well as striking in the daily increasing warmth and splendour into which we enter further each morning in the middle of November, knowing that at home are daily increasing gloom and cold. Day after day

“We seem to sail into the sun”—

and ought to feel all the elevation of soul which the poet fancied ; but the real feeling is one almost of dread, and of a desire to give that glorious luminary a wider offing. So feel even those who journey no further towards the sun than Egypt—much more those who are only passing from the frying-pan of the Mediterranean to fall into the fire of the Red Sea, or, as old Indians call it, almost with a shudder, “the other side.”

The heat—more formidable on land than water—makes a large deduction from the pleasure of “the break” made by the landing at Malta. Everything there is white and hot—the whole island, a mass of limestone, lying under an almost incessantly blazing sun, seems to stand steadily at white heat. Though there

is much to look at, people with worn eyes are apt soon to weary of looking, and even the strongest visions feel fatigued after a day's sight-seeing. The soil of the island, as probably all gazetteers tell, has been chiefly carried over from Sicily for the cultivation mainly of olives and potatoes, and is diced off into small squares, each surrounded by white stone walls, to prevent the exotic earth being washed away by the rains. Seen even from a very short distance, the whole surface of the island thus seems to consist of white stone, the walls concealing the green or black patches which they surround—and indeed the deception does little more than restore what is or was the reality, for the island is naturally but one enormous white stone. But the town of Valetta is, as to its architecture, one of the strangest and prettiest, if not most interesting, sights of its class in Europe. The steep, narrow streets might seem like some parts of old Edinburgh caricatured, were it not that the white houses shine gaily in the sun, and that the overhanging balconies and the carefully closed sun-shutters tell so plainly that we are in a fairer, and, as some think, a pleasanter clime. Everybody that cares to know, knows already all about the gorgeous (here and there tawdry) Church of St John; the finest thing, taken separately, is a chapel (chapels are partitioned off for the use of different nations) with solid silver railings of exquisite design; the poorest things are the paintings, with one or two exceptions, notably a St Jerome by Michael Angelo. Seven or eight miles from Valetta, at Citta Vecchia, there is *another church*, which is held as rivalling the

glories of St John's. Malta is a great place for churches and for priests. Churches are conspicuous in the landscape on all sides, in town and in country ; priests, with black robes and sombreros, make up a large proportion of the promenaders on the streets, and everywhere swarm "an' 'twere the patrimony of St Peter." There are said to be 3000 priests for a population of about 150,000 ; and zealous Protestants tell stories, ugly if true, as to the manner in which their reverences help themselves to whatever they want or fancy from the market carts of the peasantry. If the abundance of shepherds ensured the goodness of the sheep, the Maltese should be a flock of innocents. But persons of experience testify to the contrary ; and beyond doubt appearances are terribly against them.

And, by-the-by, it is rather distressing to hear the unanimity of testimony among people of Oriental experience as to the comparative failure of Christianity as a purifier and regenerator among the races of the South and East, and as to Mohammedanism having, in its own way, succeeded where our own faith has failed, at least as to bringing forth good fruits. "Show me a brown Christian, and you show me a rascal ; show me a brown Mohammedan, and you show me a decent fellow—decent after the ways of his kind," is a sort of maxim among those knowing the men and manners of these regions. A Scotchman who has spent thirty-five years of his life in Syria (and, by-the-by again, everywhere in the East you find Scotchmen, and find them well-to-do, well thought of, and with kindly feeling to their country and countrymen—there, for instance, is the head

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engineer of this steamer, who comes from bonny Nethan-foot, and insists on us using his cabin—hung with photographs of the wife and bairns—in which to scribble) told us that, though he himself is as good a Presbyterian as ever, the Mohammedans of that country far exceed any of the various Christian communities in morals, and especially commercial morals. Why should this be? Is the mystery made clearer or darker by the fact, which at once strikes the visitor to Eastern places of mixed population, that Mohammedanism is practically a priestless religion? In every place containing any considerable number of Christians, a leading feature of the streets is the priests with their “peculiar garb;” the Mohammedans may be much more numerous, but their priests are unseen and unheard of. When the Christian (we speak mainly of Roman Catholic and Greek Christians, for among Orientals Protestantism is “nowhere”) worships, he does it indirectly and through an elaborate machinery; when the Mohammedan worships—and his worship consists only of prayer—he employs neither church nor priest, but wherever he happens to stand at the appointed hour, turns his face and sends his words straight to what he believes to be the seat of Deity. The spectacle is one not easy to regard with contempt, or otherwise than with respect, even though we should happen to forget, as many of us are apt to do, that, after all, the Mohammedan’s God is our God—“the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob,” and that he worships none other, holding Mohammed only a man endowed with the spirit of prophecy. *Perhaps the simplicity of the Mohammedan faith*

and the directness of its modes of operation and manifestation are better fitted for the Oriental mind in its present condition ; and a day may be coming when the soil may be found ready for the good seed. But certain it is that at this day we are sowing much and reaping little but tares. But these matters are too deep for us and for here, and we must get back to meaner and plainer things.

The population of Malta, or at least of Valetta—among which the ordinary European costume prevails, and which presents little of the variety of race and garb to be seen at Gibraltar—presents to the stranger all the outward and visible signs of laziness and untruthfulness, as well as ugliness. There was not a pretty or comely face, either of man or woman, to be seen that day on Valetta streets, though, fresh from the pleasant presence of the fair and stately Englishwomen on board the packet, one may be apt to pitch a standard unfairly high. The crowds of people doing nothing, and doing it lazily, formed a spectacle the same in kind, but worse in degree, than that to be seen in an Irish town on a market-day. Enter the public market, which is arranged on a very good system, with a due separation of commodities. There you will see a good many persons apparently contemplating the possibility of buying something or another at some time of the day, though their minds appear to be very far from made up as to the what and when ; but the sellers are clearly in a still more immature condition—at least three out of four of them are stretched at full length upon the top of their own

merchandise, fresh vegetables or ill-smelling cheese, in a slumber so profound and obviously so well enjoyed that nobody thinks of being so rude as to awaken them to the sordid realities of bargaining and cheating. Let those sleeping dogs lie, if you are wise—when they rise, they will mesmerise you with that voluble stream of falsehoods which they keep in reserve for “passengers,” and will send you away a poorer and, in your own esteem, a more foolish man or woman.

The fortifications of Malta still hold a high place in professional estimate, but it is hard for non-professional people to understand, much more describe them. The Governor's house and the public offices are fine buildings, with courts and gardens both tastefully and usefully laid out. In front there is a Latin inscription to the effect that these islands were given by the love of the Maltese and the voice of Europe to the great and invincible Britain—which, though perhaps not perfectly true, is true enough for an inscription. The old Maltese aristocracy do not seem to admit its truth—they live apart, in sulks and poverty, though as Malta was always under masters, and very hard masters, it is difficult to conceive what they can be regretting or desiring. Do they mourn for the famous and infamous old Knights, with their tyranny, cruelty, and rapine? That cannot be again—

“ Their bones are dust,
Their good swords rust”—

only those who hope all things indiscriminately can add, “ Their souls are with the saints, we trust.” The Maltese never had, never could

have, a Government which took so little (less indeed than nothing) of their money, and gave them so much of their own way, which they have so much need to mend.

After leaving Malta, land is seldom sighted, and, if at all, only at a great distance ; and therefore, and also because it may be said of almost any voyage, the longer the worse, the last three or four days are apt to be the duller. Yet those who voyaged to Egypt at this time had reason to be thankful not so much that the voyage is past, as that it is past in almost unprecedented prosperity. Through nearly half November have we been sailing under clear skies and over almost unruffled waters, sitting in peace and safety, yea, in great luxury, amidst warmth and brightness. Truly, if not literally, we may say—

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We've slipt across the summer of the world.”

The last day of the voyage excelled all the others in calmness and beauty. At night, a hundred miles out in the Mediterranean, the sun sank from a cloudless sky into a waveless sea, and the effect as he slowly disappeared beneath the level waters, over whose face darkness hastened with a speed unknown in northern latitudes, was deeply impressive. Scott describes, though he never saw, the scene :—

“ With disc like battle-target red,
He rushes to his burning bed,
Dyes the wide wave with bloody light,
Then sinks at once, and all is night.”

Next morning, the sun rose to us over the palaces, and mosques, and masts of Alexandria—a sight full of strangeness, beauty, and crowded interest. Even as seen from the sea,

Alexandria presents features calling to mind its wonderful history—its far-separated ancient and modern civilisations, with its barbarism standing between and still dominant though not unmixed or unchecked. One of the first objects touched by the rising sun is the summit of Pompey's Pillar, scarcely to be distinguished at first from the chimney stalks of several very modern factories standing round; then the seraglio and a marine palace of the Mohammedan ruler; then crowds of masts, flying the colours of European nations; a fleet of British iron-clads, graceful yet grim, lies in the roadstead; and not far off floats the gay and handsome yacht of the Empress of the French.

To land at Alexandria is to plunge at once from the West into the very midst of the East—the fringing or veneering of western things and ways laid on by the existing dynasty being seldom more than sufficient to bring out the prevailing Oriental complexion of men and things in general by contrast. Western men and things are scarcely visible; the minute you land you are surrounded by men of all colours but white, and all garbs but European; the turban and fez are everywhere, the chimney-pot almost nowhere. Arab boys clamorously offer themselves to carry your impedimenta, or their donkeys to carry yourself; strings of loaded camels pass patiently and carefully along the quays; the money-changers sit in the streets; men and women are drawing water from the wells and filling their water-skins, just as in the time of Jacob. Yet everything seems in a sense familiar—the scene is but a realisation of what, by help of pen and pencil, most Europeans

have had in their mind's eye from their youth upwards. Even those who have gone no further afield have, at some time or other, imbibed the Old Testament and the "Arabian Nights"—and here are all the scenes being daily acted over again, as if the world had stood still, as indeed the Eastern world does, refusing to move, and changing only by decay.

But turning indoors, you have, especially at this time, a strong contrast to the prevailing characteristics of the streets. In the hotels, everything, excepting the adapting of the buildings to the climate, is in the European fashion and for European use; and the festivities in connection with the opening of the Canal have brought together a large and interesting collection of men, and chiefly men of note, from all parts of Europe. Here are some of the greatest of our English engineers, including the two rival bridgers of the English Channel, Mr Hawkshaw and Mr Bateman, the latter still full of fight about "the St Mary's Loch Scheme." Here, too, are many representatives of English commerce—the Mayor of Manchester, the chairmen of the Chambers of Commerce of Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, and so on, and some who, like Mr John Pender, are deputed to represent both commercial bodies and one or more of those telegraph companies that are at present engaged in laying down various lines of submarine communication throughout these regions. Nor do we quite miss the rugged countenance which so often marks the canny Scot—here, for instance, is Mr Ramsay, late M.P. for Stirling, chairman of the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce—(the chairman of the

Edinburgh Chamber. is not visible, but is said to have been disporting himself in and about Cairo for a fortnight past.) We have several M.P.'s and Lords, including Lord Dudley, who, though he gave up his London house to the Viceroy, is lodged in a hotel just like the rest of us—but the Viceroy's hands are at present so full of his royal visitors that merely noble visitors have little chance of special attentions. Nobody as yet knows what is to be done, though all the Alexandrians who cannot get to the *fêtes* agree that the thing cannot be done, and that the grand procession of boats will stick fast in the desert. All that seems settled is, that there are to be grand balls (with illuminations, &c.), each in honour of some Sovereign visitor, at Ismailia, Cairo, and here. But the Viceroy and the Empress are to be here to-day, and will doubtless be able to tell us all about everything.

IV.

THE OPENING OF THE CANAL.

ISMAILIA, November 18, 1869.

HERE is a great fleet of large but unloaded vessels, half-way through the Grand Canal, and so far, but so far only, all fears and misgivings are gone to rest. The voyage has been tolerably well accomplished, but it must not yet be concluded that more ordinary voyages will be as successful.

On Sunday evening (14th), the Empress of the French, who had quietly stepped on board her yacht the night before, after her journey up the Nile, visited the French Consulate in the Grand Square of Alexandria, which had been elaborately ornamented for her reception. In driving through the streets, there was little outward sign of welcome, though her Imperial Majesty was profuse as well as extremely graceful in her obeisances. The turban and fez-wearing population, after their kind, did not uncover; the Europeans, less the Greeks and Turks, did; but there was no cheering, partly because the British, who are the cheering nation, were few and modest, and partly because they, or some of them, were more or less restrained by the day being Sunday. The Empress was dressed in black, with yellow

ornaments and yellow feathers, seemed in good health and spirits, and almost as beautiful as ever. There is no necessity for mentioning the fact in connection with the apparently, and only apparently, cool reception of the Empress ; but it is easy to perceive, or at least to learn on inquiry, that the French are by no means so popular in Egypt, with either rulers or ruled, as might have been expected, and as they may be said to deserve. They are the predominant or most conspicuous feature (except that Italian is the language of commerce), and their Canal undertaking has immensely increased the price of labour and commodities throughout large portions of the country ; but, partly from their own and partly from the Egyptian want of readiness of assimilation, they are still regarded not only as strangers but as intrusive and overbearing strangers. "They cheat Viceroy," is the common answer of an Egyptian when asked how he likes the French. It is no great secret that not the least of the reasons why the Khédive has been solicitous for the completion of the Canal is, that he deems that his convenience and interest would be promoted by getting the French out of the country as soon as possible. There is another hint to the same effect in His Royal Highness sending his son to England for education. It is highly creditable to the Khédive, if it is true, that his feelings are in favour of the English rather than the French ; for, from first to last, we have been cold and worse than cold to him and his dynasty, whilst the French have humoured, and flattered, and at least once very nearly fought in favour of, when *we fought against*, it. But for us, the present

Viceroy would at this day have been sovereign of Syria as well as Egypt—and, from all that can be learned in these regions, it would have been better for Syria had he had his way, and had Stopford and Napier held their hands. But it seems that he has forgiven if not forgotten all this, apparently under pressure of the idea that the French are disposed to help him too much.

Directions came to Alexandria on Monday morning (15th) that all the Khédive's guests were to go on board one or other of his ships at noon, and proceed to Port Said by sea. Some attempt was made in the form of a paper written in French to divide the guests among the different ships on some rational and convenient system ; but all such documents here are ill-expressed, ill-understood, and ill-obeyed. The variety of languages in use among the *employées* of the Government is so great that they understand orders in quite different ways, which, joined to the want of precision and promptitude of Eastern people generally, leads to most things being made a mess of. Almost nothing is done either in the way or at the time commanded, though it is always done somehow, and sooner or later. This must not be taken, however, as reflecting much on the management of the Viceroy or his Government ; he is obeyed better than any Eastern ruler, even than our own Government in India, though he is obeyed worse than the pettiest ruler dealing with non-Oriental subjects. On this occasion, everybody went to what ship he chose, or rather to whatever ship the Arab boatmen chose to take him, with the result of enormous confusion and delay. One result was, that,

instead of all the Egyptian ships leaving at noon, only one left at all, and that one not till evening. There is reason to suspect, however, that the extreme prudence of the Egyptian sailors contributed largely to this result. It was blowing very fresh from the sea ; the bar presented a very deterring aspect ; and the vessels had been almost entirely divested of ballast in order to give them a better chance of getting through the Canal. One steamer, a fine vessel, though not of the largest size, led the way, but none of the rest followed, being additionally deterred by the frantic pitching of a large French steamer seen going through the surf. The one Egyptian steamer that tempted the waves that stormy night contained chiefly British guests—among them our fellow-citizens Mr Livingstone, chairman of the Chamber of Commerce, and Mr Falshaw, who had been engaged at an international commercial congress at Cairo regarding the future management of the Canal. It will be seen from the resolutions appended that the Congress has not done much, except to make sundry proposals highly favourable to persons engaged in the transit of goods and to foreigners, but of which neither the Canal Company nor the Egyptian Government is quite certain to see the beauty. Though their insertion may slightly interrupt the narrative, it may be well to give these resolutions here. They are as follows :—

“1. That periodical reports be furnished by the Egyptian Government to the different Chambers of Commerce of the productive capability of the country.

“2. The revision of Egyptian laws and usages in regard to commerce.

“3. That there be a uniformity in the system of

measurement of vessels ; meanwhile, that the method be that of the French Veritas.

"4. The exemption of all merchandise passing through the Canal from any dues to Government.

"5. The exemption of coal, either as cargo or as ship's fuel, from transit dues.

"6. That improved facilities be afforded for the establishment of houses of business and depots in the Isthmus.

"7. That same be afforded for industrial and commercial companies, and that no legislative or administrative obstacles be allowed to obstruct business.

"8. That uniformity be established in the laws of foreign countries affecting their respective communities settling in Egypt—in fact, uniform jurisdiction and the relinquishment of the privileges of different foreign Governments in the country.

"9. The perfect neutrality of the Canal.

"10. Immunity of private property passing through from seizure in time of war.

"11. Fresh soundings to be taken of the Red Sea, and a new map to be published ; also, new lights to be erected where required.

"12. The metrical system of weights and measures to be established in Egypt ; and the Conference recommend a uniform monetary system to be established in Egypt, and also in Europe."

The Viceroy's treatment of his guests is in all departments handsome, even splendid ; but aboard this vessel, on this occasion, those few visitors who kept their seats and stomachs were inclined to grumble at the terrible intervals between the courses of the dinner, until the explanation began to appear—the stewards were sea-sick. Some of the sailors, unless their appearance and postures much belied them, were in the same unhappy condition, and altogether there was a considerable amount of anarchy, a large portion, though not the whole,

of which was ascribable to the *mal de mer*. There is a great want of discipline on board Egyptian vessels, though the officers are quite sufficiently despotic and the crew quite sufficiently subservient. If orders and curses, loudly and volubly screamed out in Arabic, could secure good order, disorder would be unknown; but, in this as in other cases, it was clear that the more said the less ~~was~~ done. The passengers, too, suffer considerably from the want of easy communication with the servants, who speak chiefly Arabic with a little Italian, and seldom more than half-a-dozen words of English, which, however, they are very proud to display on all occasions, including the most unfit. Thus it goes almost any morning:— Passenger to steward—“For God’s sake, bring me a little cognac.” “All right—ver’ good—yeez, yeez—good night”—and is seen no more. The Egyptians have the character of being very bad sailors, and we are not in a position to deny it. The authorities at Alexandria lately fined an unlucky joker very smartly for saying that, if anybody desired to commit suicide without raising any question with the insurance companies, he had only to take a passage on board one of the Pasha’s vessels. This was not a pleasant anecdote to hear on putting out to the Mediterranean over the bar of Alexandria on a stormy night and in a ballastless vessel; and a vague feeling of distrust, supplementing the tremendous rolling of the vessel, made the number of sleepers that night very few. In the morning, there was reason to believe that the mistrust *had not* been altogether misplaced; for there *were* unmistakable symptoms that those in

charge had, for half-an-hour in broad daylight, mistaken Damietta for Port Said, which is 30 miles farther to the east. Yet our captain was an excellent fellow—a gigantic Arab, who had been at Birkenhead, and who, so far as regards stamping his feet, gnashing his teeth, and cursing in Arabic, could have brought us through anything. At last, the place we are looking for is sighted—a place almost the very ground of which was made by man but the other day, and which is about to be formally dedicated, as it is intended, whether or not it is destined, as one of the chief seats of the future commerce of the world.

Port Said is hard to find, at least to those who sail by rule of thumb, by reason of its rising but a few inches above the level of the waters, which lie both before and behind it. It is difficult to "see land" when there is as nearly as possible no land to see. The so-called land at the northern entrance of the Great Canal consists of a thin spit of sand, having in front the Mediterranean, and behind the Lake Menzaleh, which is but a bay or enormous lagoon formed partly by the Mediterranean and partly by one of the mouths of the Nile. The first thing visible from the sea is a forest of masts, as of a fleet lying out at sea; then, by aid of glasses, may be seen long lines of tents fringing the sea; and, last of all, are seen the houses, which, almost until you land, appear as floating on the water. But, long before anything but the masts is visible, a thick white mist rises over the ships, with frequent flashes breaking through it; soon after, a roll as of distant thunder;—it is the fleet in the

harbour saluting the Emperor of Austria on his arrival. On nearing the piers, or rather breakwaters (which are made of large square blocks of concrete, not built, but laid down irregularly), all the vessels in the port are seen to be profusely decorated with flags, and throughout the town and all along the lines of tents are poles, with ropes between, hung with flags, chiefly of gauze, and coloured Chinese lanterns. The effect produced by the endless variety of colours on thousands of flags, fluttering in the breeze against a cloudless sky, was very pleasing, and indeed exhilarating, even viewed as a mere spectacle, and apart from its significance as part of a memorable celebration.

There was one conspicuous exception to the prevailing gaiety. Outside the bar, lay the fleet of five British ironclads (the Lord Warden, Prince - Consort, Royal Oak, Caledonia, and Bellerophon), unadorned, silent, and looking very sulky. There appeared also to be something wrong, or at least unusual, in the order in which they were lying, one of them appearing to have run in on the stern of another. The explanation was afterwards forthcoming—two of them had stuck in the mud. They were of too great draught to have entered the Canal, or even the harbour; but, in coming in from sea (without a pilot), they had come just a little too far. The Royal Oak had, on Monday morning, been going in front when she suddenly grounded in the mud, and, before the warning could be attended to, was run into by the Prince-Consort, which then grounded herself. The Prince-Consort came with such violence as to

drive the Royal Oak twenty or thirty yards farther forward in the mud, smash her boats, and considerably damage her rigging. The news of the accident caused considerable excitement and disappointment among the British visitors ; and some zealous correspondents and others rushed off to the telegraph office to send the news to Europe. But at the very time these messages, some of them expressing doubt about the vessels being ever got off, were being transmitted, the disaster had been almost quite repaired. The Prince - Consort, having been lightened, was got off in the evening, and the Royal Oak early next morning. They were found to have been seven feet deep in the soft mud. The bank on which they struck is not laid down in the French charts by which they were steering, and is supposed to have been formed within a few months. It was an untoward accident for all parties. It gave increased conspicuousness, so to speak, to our backward position in all these proceedings, if it did not also reflect somewhat on our reputation as seamen ; though perhaps that was repaired by the skill and energy shown in getting the vessels off again. It tended to inflict damage on the reputation of the new port, by showing that vessels of only two or three feet more draught than the Canal is said to admit could be grounded two miles from the entrance, and that even at that distance out there may be banks this month where there were none last. Two large Italian war-vessels did not venture in so far as the British vessels, but lay a mile farther out. Why did either we or our Italian friends send as representatives in a great

ceremonial, vessels which could not possibly be present ?

Getting past this unpleasant sight of our own vessels sticking in the mud, we creep slowly into the harbour between two lines of vessels of almost all nations, chiefly men-of-war and passenger vessels, and a few yachts, all decorated to the utmost, and in all respects striving to look their best. Two nations are conspicuous by their almost entire absence. No British vessel was to be seen in the port, at least at this time, except an ugly schooner from Liverpool—which, by-the-by, amidst all the flaunting and thundering rejoicings of the next day, attracted some attention by confining her display to one old flag, and a bit of another, and by taking the opportunity to discharge her cinders with a disagreeable noise when the bands were playing the French national air as the Empress Eugenie's yacht swung to her moorings. Not a single American flag was to be seen, except over the American Consulate ; but there were American citizens present, who took occasion to remark that they had opened the Great Pacific Railway (1700 miles long) without any more ceremony than driving a gold spike and drinking a fair allowance of champagne. As we pass the Pasha's magnificent yacht, Mahrussee, our royal host is seen standing on the paddle-box, a man somewhat squat and in-kneed, having beside him the Emperor of Austria, Mr Elliot, the British Ambassador at Constantinople, Lord Alfred Paget, and other personages even greater, but about whose identity there is the greatest diversity of opinion, and the most entire destitution of knowledge. And

here it may be permitted to remark, in explanation or exculpation of all mistakes in matters of fact, past, present, and to come, that in this region, at this time, anybody will tell you anything and nobody knows anything. There is no programme of the proceedings, and, though there were, there would be no chance of its being adhered to. Everybody is left to guess as his fancy leads, and to go wherever he likes, or rather wherever he can get. Even the officers of the Pasha's own ships, if asked for whom they have been firing the salute which you are so glad is just over, tell you that they know nothing about it, and had no orders about it, but fired because other people were firing. Perhaps it does not much matter—the spectacles are very fine, though there is no concurrence of opinion as to the particular signification of each, nor any notice or much arrangement as to when they are to take place.

There is not much to be said—perhaps the less the better—about the newly-created town of Port Said. Doubtless, it will mend in time—as yet, it has had no time to study appearances or even essentials; but for the present the likeliest thing to it is the sheds at a Highland Society's cattle show. Instead, however, of turf trodden into mud, the soil consists of a sort of cross between sand and dust. Yet the sight of the strange variety of nations, tribes, and tongues, sitting drinking various liquors (English beer for choice) before the door of whichever hotel happens to have its front in shade at the particular hour, is a sight worth seeing. Here the European, and especially the French, costume and habits prevail over the

Oriental, probably because the Occidentals see at this spot a good prospect of progress and profits.

At night, on the 15th, though there was no regular *fête*, there was a very fine spectacle in the illumination of the vessels in the harbour. The Pasha's yacht was adorned with strings of variegated lamps in the form of a suspension bridge, and most of the other vessels had strings of lanterns outlining their whole rigging, so as to make them appear as phantom ships in full sail. There was also a display of rockets—only middling. The Pasha entertained on board his yacht a large dinner party of his royal and otherwise exalted friends, followed by a ball attended by about 800 persons, considerably more miscellaneous. A considerable number of ambitious visitors, blessed with the requisite amount of impudence for going uninvited, received due access and honour. We were not present, and are even too modest to describe what we did not see.

Next day (the 16th) was the day of grand receptions. Shortly after seven o'clock, the cannon roared out on all sides in honour of the approach of the Crown-Prince of Prussia; the yards were manned; and German national airs were heard on every hand. Similar honours were soon after bestowed on Prince Louis of Hesse. But the loudest and gayest welcome was reserved for the Empress of the French, whose yacht began to approach very slowly up the straight entrance to the harbour shortly after eight o'clock. The cannon from scores of men-of-war thundered forth welcome, till ears were stunned with sound and the atmosphere thickened with

smoke. The crews, symmetrically drawn out upon the yards, booms, and bowsprits, cheered, each after the manner of its nation, and each nation in turn. Now came the French, then the North German, the Austrian, the Italian, the Swedish, the Dutch, the Spanish (feeble)—but strongest, and perhaps therefore most striking of all, was the Egyptian. The Egyptian cheering is not simultaneous, but in the form of challenge and answer, or echo, and seems to be less of the nature of a cheer than of a blessing or prayer. First, hundreds of men, aloft on one vessel, yell forth certain words or sounds, which are taken up by the crew of the next vessel of the same nation, and so sent all round the port; and then again boom forth the cannon, and again "*Partant pour la Syrie*" rises up from twenty decks. The Viceroy leaves his yacht in a small boat to meet the Empress, and is received with royal honours by the ships of all nations as he passes down the splendid vista of blue waters, walled with massive war-vessels, stern with armament and gay with decoration. He is loudly cheered, with all variety of cheers, as he passes the vessels containing his guests, and it is pleasing to hear, though late and far off, one thundering hip-hip-hurrah from unmistakably British lungs. In our own vessel, the nationalities are mixed, French being nearly a moiety; but, strange to say, our French shipmates make no sign as the Empress' yacht swings round our bow, with Her Majesty full in sight. Though we Britons are scattered about, and unprepared, and in a sense unconcerned, we cannot stand this; the Chairman of the Edin-

burgh Chamber passes the word to be ready for a cheer ; the Chairman of the Liverpool Chamber fuggles from the bow ; and a splendid hip-hip-hurrah (for so small a number) is delivered just as the Empress passes the nearest point. She is obviously gratified, steps forward, bows several times with her accustomed grace, and rather more than her accustomed bend, then waves her handkerchief, and finally applies that instrument to her eyes—which last movement we all hail as satisfactory evidence of our having made an impression. Her Majesty had on a white shawl, and a pork-pie hat, with green veil. There were unmistakable symptoms that, personally, the Empress is a favourite, as are all pretty women, even though not pretty Empresses, with men of all nations, and her reception was one of the most genuine as well as grandest displays of this day of pageantry and magnificence.

The forenoon was occupied with interchanges of visits between the royal personages, the ceremonies of the grand receptions being repeated in part on each occasion. The visitor was first saluted by the ship which he was leaving, and then by the vessel which he visited, and as each vessel was of a different nation, in each case some of the differences in national ways and appearances were brought out with striking and sometimes amusing effect.

The more formal ceremonies began in the afternoon with a double religious ceremony of great interest and magnificence. About a mile to the north-west of the harbour, a Mohammedan mosque and a Christian church had been extemporised upon the beach, in close proximity.

Though only for temporary use, and of temporary materials, they were gorgeous in appearance. Still more gorgeous was a pavilion erected for the Khédive and his royal guests, and other representative persons. A plank road, about a mile long, lined on both sides with flags and other decorations, led along the sands from the quay to these erections, and was double lined from end to end by Egyptian infantry. Along this, those engaged in the ceremonials and the invited spectators proceeded to the pavilion. At the head of the procession of grandees walked the Empress of the French on the arm of the Emperor of Austria, having on either side the Khédive and the Crown-Prince of Prussia, and, behind, all the other royal personages, and a crowd of Generals, Admirals, and Ambassadors. In the pavilion, the "platform - list" was at least respectable, though some illustrious persons are probably omitted, being so exalted as to be above the ken of almost any one of the spectators, whilst the Egyptian officers were each and all in the profoundest ignorance and apparent unconcern. The Empress of the French was in the middle of the front seat of the pavilion, supported on the right by the Khédive of Egypt, the Princess of Holland, and the Hon. Mr Elliot, British Minister at Constantinople; and on the left by the Emperor of Austria, the Crown-Prince of Prussia, Prince Louis of Hesse, Prince Henry of Holland, Prince Oscar of Sweden, and the Grand Duke Michael of Russia. Immediately behind the Empress is the celebrated Arab patriot, Abd-el-Kader, wearing the Cross of the Legion of Honour, bestowed on him

by the sovereign of the country against which he waged so long and unequal a fight. Beside him stands the eldest son and now the heir of the Khédive. M. de Lesseps, the real hero of the day, was busy on the platform before the arrival of the royal persons, but afterwards kept in the background. He is a tall, good-looking man, with dark complexion, white hair, and an intellectual countenance; his age is nearly sixty-five, but he does not look so old, though showing to-day traces of toil and anxiety. The Empress was, of course, the admired of all admirers, and was evidently trying—and with great success—to look her best, which is superb. She has become slightly *embonpoint*, and is just a little too round in the shoulders; but her beauty, and the grace both of her figure and her movements, are still pleasant to behold. Her Majesty wore a lavender silk dress, richly flounced with lace, and a black hat and feathers. The Khédive's face shows some vigour, but no beauty, and his figure is dumpy and deficient in straightness. The Emperor of Austria wore his sandy red beard and moustaches, and did not look like a man of great mental power. No question can be made that the Crown-Prince of Prussia was, physically and intellectually, the best looking of the royal persons exhibited on this occasion. Behind and on either side of the royalties, stood and sat many less exalted persons, such as Von Beust, the Prime Minister of Austria, and Sir A. Milne, Admiral of the British Fleet; also two ladies of the French Court, and three or four others distinguished in rank, but names unknown. There, too, was Lord Houghton,

resplendent in the scarlet and gold of a deputy-lieutenant, and, not there, but on the sands, among dirty Arabs, and habited in a black frock-coat, is Lord Dudley, the Khédive's London host. In the same position were Lord Alfred Paget, the Hon. Thomas Bruce, and other more or less notable persons. A considerable body of Coptic priests, in their black robes and hats, sat in front of one of the wings of the pavilion, but were allotted no other part in the ceremony, though the Copts are the Christians of Egypt. The crowd on the sand between the pavilion and the church and mosque was of the most miscellaneous character. There were, of course, regulations about admission to the ground and pavilion, but nobody seemed to know what they were, and admission and exclusion were most capriciously dealt out; dignitaries and grandees were kept back, and insignificants, armed with impudence, strutted proudly in—if they had not, the newspapers would have had no proper description of the ceremony. Before the ceremony began, awfully dirty and diligently-scratching Arabs were shouldering and horrifying all sorts of distinguished and cleanly persons.

The ceremony began by the Mohammedan high-priest of Cairo reading something of the nature of a prayer or blessing from a rostrum in the mosque. The document was beautifully short, and doubtless quite to the point. Then the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Jerusalem, with attendant priests, performed mass in the church, occupying in the celebration an amount of time which was much grudged by those standing in the burning sun. The only speech was an

address declaimed by Monsignor Bauer, confessor and almoner to the Empress of the French—a swarthy, handsome fiery Frenchman, who has in his time been a votary of several religions, including Judaism. Standing on the steps of the Christian church, he spoke with great fervour, gesticulating after the French fashion, but with much grace, and frequently pointing alternately to east and west in accordance with his topic of discourse. He addressed each of the royal persons in turn. He thanked the Viceroy for the aid and countenance he had given to the great undertaking whose completion they were now celebrating; for his magnanimous protection of Christianity, to which history would yet do justice; and for his splendid services to the civilisation of the East. The Empress was there in the name of France, to grace and bless an undertaking in which France had taken a deep interest. The Emperor of Austria gave the glory of his presence at the marriage of the Adriatic with the Indian Ocean. M. de Lesseps (whose name evoked loud cheers) had to be congratulated on having accomplished the greatest service to the commerce of the world since the discovery of America. But yesterday, the Canal was impossible—to-day, it is magnificent, and achieved. It would unite the East and West not only in commerce but ideas, and so would greatly bless humanity. Monsignor's speech was very eloquent, but very long; and it pleased the favourably placed spectators to observe that the Khédive fell sound asleep in the middle of an eloquent apostrophe to himself, and on two several occasions came very near indeed to tumbling off his chair, on which he sat in the

European and to him uneasy fashion, waking up after each lurch, staring round him in bewilderment, and then looking impatiently towards the eloquent Monsignor. The Empress, beside whom he sat, is very devout, and has much reverence for her confessor, but, though evidently somewhat shocked, she was as evidently much amused. After it was over, there was a general opinion that Christianity had not that day cut a good figure, and that Mohammedanism had had the advantage, especially in the virtue of brevity, which is a very great virtue when the congregation are standing in the desert under a blazing sun. But let us hope that there was significance and promise in that morally grand spectacle, never before beheld, of the two faiths standing side by side uttering prayers and blessings with one object and at least outwardly in one spirit. No doubt, the priests of the respective faiths thus set cheek-by-jowl, hated and despised each other—in fact, those sentiments were visible through a moderately good glass; but the world now and then makes leaps in spite of priests. At all events, we have got some length when a despotic Mohammedan monarch displays in face of all the earth not only tolerance but impartiality, and sets before his assembled subjects and guests both faiths and a free choice.

In the evening, there was another but only partial illumination of the shipping, the Viceroy's vessel being more splendid than on the previous evening, though some of the other vessels did not relight at all; the town, quays, and beach blazed with lights in all colours, tastefully

arranged ; and there was another display of fireworks far exceeding its predecessor. The night closed amidst gloomy rumours that a vessel of the Viceroy, called the "Latif," sent on to reconnoitre, had stuck fast about thirty miles down the Canal ; and the gloom would have been much greater had it not been that nobody, of even a few days' experience, readily believes anything in this land of lies, mystery, and confusion.

On the morning of the long-announced 17th, the evil rumour of the previous evening received countenance from the sight of boat-loads of workmen and soldiers departing down the Canal, in the grey of the morning, with the object, it was reasonably inferred, of aiding in the removal of the obstruction. An evil augury was also drawn from the fact that the Khédive had gone in advance in a steam-tender of light draught at five o'clock of the previous evening. But about eight o'clock there was movement among the vessels carrying royal personages, and hope revived. Soon afterwards, the splendid steam yacht *L'Aigle*, bearing the Empress of the French, left her moorings, and entered the Canal ; the other sovereigns or members of royal families followed according to precedence, or at least intended to do so, but there were some displacements ; and throughout the day, vessel followed vessel (all steamers, except one or two sailing vessels in tow) at short intervals. There were almost no private merchantmen, the vessels consisting of war-steamers and transport vessels belonging to different nations, and passenger ships of the great public companies trading between Europe

and the East. The following, as near as we could see, was the order of this memorable and imposing procession :—

1. French yacht, L'Aigle, carrying Empress of the French.
2. Austrian yacht, Gräf, carrying Emperor of Austria.
3. Prussian yacht, carrying the Crown-Prince of Prussia.
4. Swedish sloop of war, carrying Prince Oscar.
5. Russian yacht, carrying the Grand Duke Michael.
6. Vessel of the Russian Company, carrying the Russian Ambassador at Constantinople.
7. Dutch sloop of war, carrying Prince Henry of Holland.
8. British yacht, Psyche, carrying Hon. Mr Elliot, British Minister at Constantinople.
9. Russian war vessel, carrying Russian Admiral.
10. Peluse, vessel of the Messageries Impériales Company.
11. British war tender Rapid.
12. French gunboat.
13. Austrian vessel, Vulcan.
14. French corvette, Fourbin.
15. French gunboat.
- 16 and 17. French steam yacht, towing English yacht Cambria.
18. British vessel Dido.
19. British steam yacht.
20. Swedish vessel, Tonareg.
21. British sloop of war.
22. Vessel of Messageries Impériales, Thabor.
23. Vessel of Austrian Lloyd's, Pluto.
24. Vessel of British Indian Telegraph Company, Hawk.
25. Russian merchant steamer.
26. French merchant vessel, Europe.
27. English vessel, Lynx.
28. Italian screw, Principe Tomasso.
29. Do. do. Principe Oddone.
30. Italian steamer, Prince Amadeo.
31. Austrian gunboat.
32. Italian steamer, Scilla.
33. Austrian Lloyd's steamer, America.
34. Egyptian Government steamer, Chabin.
35. Do. do. do., Fayoum.

At least a score of others followed, the largest being made last in the procession, but the names of

the second half of the fleet could not be obtained. There was moral as well as other grandeur in the spectacle of the masts and flags of the far-stretching procession of vessels of all nations, making their steady and stately way across the desert, the destined harbingers of a current of commerce and civilisation passing ceaselessly across those arid sands through the coming ages.

There is much anxiety as well as curiosity as we enter the Canal, for on both sides we are, of course, within a few feet of being stranded ; the ship is managed by an Arab crew, quite new to this new business, and not good at any business ; and to stick is to be left in the desert for an indefinite time, and to lose all the waiting splendours a-head. There is nothing to be seen, at least on the first part of the route, in the way of scenery, except that afforded by the glorious desert sunsets, and all intelligent eyes are turned to watch the effect of the "wash" upon the banks — for on that, more than on anything else, depends the future of the Canal. For the first few miles on the route through Lake Menzaleh, where the banks, composed of the soil raised from the bottom by dredging, shelve very gently, the action of the water upon them in wake of the steamers was quite trifling, even as seen from a very large paddle-steamer placed about the middle of the procession. But soon, where the banks get steeper, though they are built of scrapings composed of mud rather than sand, and are slightly faced with stone, the "wash" was seen to operate so strongly as apparently to ensure a gradual falling in, requiring pretty constant dredging and rebuilding. A few miles from the entrance,

a passenger took the improper liberty of sounding the Canal, and found the depth 21 feet, 4 inches, or about 7 feet below promise and announcement. About thirty miles from Port Said, we passed the vessel, the "Latif," which had been blocking the passage, but had been got out of the way. Hitherto all had gone pretty well, though slowly, and would have gone better but for our immediate predecessor being an ill-managed Egyptian steamer, which seemed more troubled with the breadth than the length of the road, and which, as she staggered about, swept down the posts erected to mark the channel. At dinner, we bumped, but got off again; and soon after a harder shock told that we had done it again, and more effectively. The coming catastrophe was visible to the most ignorant several minutes before it happened; the captain howled, but the steersmen were having a jocular conversation among themselves, and we ran hard and fast upon the bank. Then the captain cursed, and the pilot wrung his hands, and the boatswain took a rope's end and began belabouring the crew indiscriminately. None of them had had anything whatever to do with the matter; but in this country, when any one gets into a mess, he seeks to put things to rights by licking somebody else. On this occasion, we had the additional comfort of seeing that one of our consorts behind had got into a still tighter place, and was sending up rockets for help. In about half-an-hour we got off, in a way much more inexplicable than that in which we had got on. Fate has the principal management here, and manages very ill on the whole. It will be

necessary to have some other steersman for vessels passing through the Suez Canal, though there is nothing to do but keep in the middle of a channel generally running straight as an arrow. a

Till emerging from Abu Bellah Lake, nearly forty miles from Port Said, the Canal, whether passing through lakes or over the sand, is banked in on both sides by the material brought up in dredging. On emerging from Abu Bellah Lake, we enter upon a great cutting of about four miles, where the Canal has been dug through high-lying sands to a depth at the maximum of nearly 55 feet. At this place, the Canal at the surface does not seem so much as 180 feet broad. The sufficiency of the embankment is thus tested under other conditions than hitherto: the Canal is narrower, and the banks, owing to the great difficulty and cost of sloping them farther backwards, go sheer into the water at a dip apparently of about 1 in 2. This portion of the Canal has been in use for boats of small draught, employed in M. de Lesseps' own operations for about nine months, so that it may be said to have been already mildly tested. The result, so far as can be judged, is not altogether satisfactory. The banks have stood somewhat better than people who saw them when first made had expected; but there are abundant proofs of crumbling, and threats of much more. The "wash," as the vessels pass along, is very violent, and the banks are seen to suffer under its operation. All along, the banks at the edge of the water are indented with little bays where the sand has fallen in; large portions close to the water-edge

are seen to be honeycombed, and so rapidly nearing their fall, and a foot towing-path at the bottom of the embankment is already, within this cutting, washed away in very many places. Our soundings about half through the cutting showed 25 feet, being the highest shown during the passage, and yet 3 feet below the promised and intended maximum. It may thus be safely concluded that the Canal is as yet utterly impracticable for vessels drawing $26\frac{1}{2}$ feet, which are invited by the Company's advertisements. And it is to be feared that the soundings did not bring out the worst of it. Our vessel drew somewhat less than 14 feet; but repeatedly, and for considerable periods, during the night of the 17th, we felt those grinding and *stotting* motions which indicate that a vessel is scraping the bottom—it is often felt in vessels forcing a way over the soft-bottomed shallows off Rotterdam. Another thing, both important and unexpected, is here observable. There is a current running at the rate of nearly two miles an hour, and running to the north—that is, running from the Bitter Lakes, which were filled from both the Red Sea and the Mediterranean. One important deduction from this fact is, that the Canal has now got all the water obtainable, and is throughout filled to the level of the two seas, or of the higher of them, which practically means that the further deepening undoubtedly required can only be obtained, not by filling, but by dredging. How so considerable a current, setting in a northward direction, was to be accounted for, was a puzzle, even to engineers; and those of them who had been through before were taken

by surprise, for, only a few weeks ago, the current was running in the opposite direction. The only explanation gaining any acceptance is, that, with the full moon, there has been a very high tide in the Red Sea, which has raised it very considerably above the level of the Mediterranean. There is a difficulty as to believing this, in the fact that we are fifty miles from the Red Sea, with extensive lakes between, through which the Canal passes, not between banks but between buoys. Another explanation offered is, that there is an extremely low tide in the Mediterranean—which seems to us more feasible, as, though that sea is nearly as distant from the particular point as the Red Sea, its ebbs and flows are not expended in lakes, but act directly on the Canal, banked throughout. The current, however, is a surprise, and more or less of a mystery ; and the practical effects of so strong a stream have not been foreseen, and cannot yet be conjectured.

Though the moonlight was brilliant, some cause—unknown to any one on board—had compelled us to anchor for the night about five or six miles north from Ismailia. There were some fine sights as we steamed on next morning. At one point, where it had been found necessary to make one of the very few curves of the Canal less sharp, there were Arabs, camels, and donkeys, all counting by hundreds, remedying the mistake, the two last-named class of animals carrying the sand from the water-edge over the top of the embankment in panniers. The entrance to Lake Timsah, on which stands the town of Ismailia, presents almost a landscape—some slight elevations, and still slighter

appearances of verdure in the shape of tamarisk shrubs. The town of Ismailia looks and is a far superior place to Port Said, and is to-day gorgeous with flags and triumphal arches. In the western distance are some hills, at first refreshing to the sight, but which are soon detected to be only sand-hills. These form the Land of Goshen. If that land was of old anything like what it is now, depend upon it that when Joseph invited his brethren to dwell there, he only meant to be upsides with them for their previous maltreatment.

There was an illumination here last night (17th) in honour of the arrival of the royal visitors ; but as they did not land, the whole affair was shorn of its fair proportions.

To-day has been a day of great magnificence in display. The vessels in the lake were dressed in their best, and not only the bright little town, but the thousands of tents on the sand, shone forth resplendent in every colour. The Empress of the French and other grandees landed about two o'clock, amidst a turbaned multitude of many thousands, and drove through triumphal arches, and along a magnificently decorated road or street, apparently about two miles in length—the decorations consisting partly of trees, which, in this region, are rarities and delights. About half-an-hour after, the Khédive was seen driving himself about in an open pony chaise, like a popular constitutional monarch, courting the middle-classes. The whole route was double-lined with the Khédive's troops, cavalry and infantry—remarkably fine men, and, as a rule, remarkably fine horses—though it may be taken as more than likely that on such an

occasion the Khédive showed only his best. There was afterwards a grand "march past," and even British officers, always addicted to invidious comparisons, admitted that the infantry were physically powerful and marched well, and that the cavalry were better mounted than any native cavalry possessed by the British Government in India. One of the finest parts of the spectacle was afforded by three regiments of lancers, each mounted on horses of different colours — one grey, one bay, one white or cream-colour. Of the ordinary cavalry, there was one regiment mounted on chestnuts, one on bay, and one on jet-black. The most striking part of the spectacle, however, consisted of the manoeuvres of the Bedouin or irregular cavalry, who, mounted on their small but fiery Arab horses, charged over the sands, yelling their war-cries, slashing their scymitars, and firing off their pistols and long muskets. Altogether, the scenes at Ismailia on this memorable day, were extremely grand, but strangely mixed. Essentially, it was Oriental, but French-polished. It was barbarism rejoicing, or affecting to rejoice, in the incursive progress of a civilisation in presence of which it must die.

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It would be presumptuous yet to express any decided opinion as to the amount of "success" which the Canal may be said to have attained, or to promise. One day's experience supplies but slender data, and those engaged in the first day's navigation are of course inexperienced, and many of them violently prejudiced, and praying if not seeking for difficulties. But, on the other hand, that half of the Canal now

passed through is by far the best made and least incomplete half ; and almost none of the vessels passing draw more than *half* of the 28 feet which is the Canal's nominal depth. There is one favourable fact, in at least forty vessels (probably about eighty, but we cannot at present speak for those behind) having got through so far without material difficulty or impediment. But, in the first place, they have not averaged a speed of more than four miles an hour ; and, in the second and more important place, to take through forty vessels all under 16 feet—and all but one under 14 feet—does nothing to prove that you can get vessels of 26 feet through, or of any greater draught than those that have actually passed. The depth is the main point ; and it seems almost impossible to resist the conclusion that it is not nearly sufficient for vessels of a size likely to trade between Europe and India, nor—taking, of course, the shallowest parts as the test, as the strength of a chain is the strength of its weakest link—much more than half the depth undertaken and announced. The next, and scarcely less important question, is the breadth, meaning the breadth of the deepened channel within which alone vessels can pass each other. So far as could be judged from several appearances, it may be taken as generally true that there is not at present room for two vessels of any considerable size to pass each other ; here and there it may be done, but unless it can be done everywhere—*i.e.*, anywhere that the vessels may chance to come together—it cannot be said to be done at all. The nominal breadth of the channel is 72 feet. The

breadth from paddle to paddle of the steamer of about 2000 tons, in which we travel, is about 60 feet. Of course, two vessels, making together 120 feet in breadth, cannot pass in a space of 72 feet. But suppose, as indeed we may take as settled fact, that paddle-steamers will be, as a rule, excluded—screw-steamers of the size required for the through trade will be about 40 feet in breadth—and you can no more pass 80 feet than you can 120 feet through a space of 72 feet. There seem to be no made “sidings,” except, perhaps, at Kantara, as you come out from the south end of Lake Menzaleh, and, on the northern half of the Canal, there seem no natural passing-places except in Lake Timsah, off Ismaïlia. By diligent working of the telegraph, which goes along the Canal all the way, something may be done to make arrangements overcoming this difficulty, or it might be arranged—as a means of communication which must be got through within the twenty-four hours, if it is to be of much value—that the passage of the Canal should be open north and south on alternate days. That, however, is a considerable drawback, considering that the sea voyage on both sides renders punctuality to any previously fixed time impracticable, so that on arrival at either Port Said or Suez a minute after, say, either midday or midnight, would make a difference of twenty-four hours. There remains the very great question of obstruction by accident. Speaking from slender but impressive experience, we would say that it is very easy for any vessel to get aground—or, reversing the saying of consolatory Scotch

gamekeepers, "There's a hantle mair room to hit than to miss." If one vessel (we speak throughout of vessels required for the through trade, and not of yachts and despatch vessels) gets aground, we see no chance for any other vessel passing till she begot off. Thesum, then, of the whole matter, according to present lights, is this—that, before the Grand Canal is fully or even largely available for the commerce between East and West, it must be deepened, widened, and solidified. The thing is possible, though expensive, to do, but it has not yet been done.

Fuller, if not more careful, soundings than were in our power to take, were taken by a friend in a yacht, with the following results :—

Entrance. Port Side.	Starboard Side.	
Feet.	Feet.	
25½	16½	} Small Patch.
25½	16½	
28½	16½	
27	16½	
28	27	
26½	26½	} From Entrance to Kantara.
25½	25	
27	25	
27	28	
28	26	
25	29	
24	28½	
25	26	
24	28	
25	26	
24	28	
24	23½	
27	23½	
27	24	
29	23½	
28	23½	
27½	23½	
29	23	
29	24	
27	22	
26	21	

Entrance. Port Side. Feet.	Starboard. Feet.	
26	23	} From Entrance to Kantara.
26	21	
27	28	
27	27	
28	28½	
28	28	
29½	29½	
25	26½	
25	29	
27	27	
26	26	} Abreast of Kantara.
29	29	
27	27	
25	25	
26	26	
24½	25	
30	30	} From Kantara to Lake Timsah.
25	25	
29	29	
26½	26	
24	24	
14*	25	
13*	25	
22	25	
24	26	
30	30	
18	18	

* Too close.

Lake Timsah varied from 19 to 23 feet. A similar result was obtained from soundings taken by Admiral Milne, his minimum figure being 22. It will be seen that among more than 100 soundings, only 24, or about 1 in 4, showed the nominal depth. The average depth shown on this section is 26.05 feet for the port side (53 soundings), and 25.08 feet for the starboard side (53 soundings.) But, as no vessel can pass with greater draught than the minimum, it is clear that the Canal is not yet available for vessels of 20 feet, and as a fact, vessels of several feet below that figure had to be left hard and fast last night.

V.

REJOICINGS AT ISMAILIA.

ISMAILIA, November 19, 1869.

The rejoicings of last night—consisting of a costly and splendid illumination of the town, and also, it might be said, of the surrounding country, an illumination of the shipping, displays of fireworks on a large scale, and a magnificent ball at the Governor's palace—lasted far into this morning. The guests at the ball were at least three thousand, and seldom, if ever, has so great a multitude been sumptuously entertained under one roof at one time. The Governor's Palace is to appearance a fine building, and the fittings and furniture of the rooms, in green and gold, are as splendid as money can make them. There is, however, no one room fitted for a monster ball, and the company was scattered through four or five apartments communicating with each other. One large room there was—the supper-room built on behind the Palace, where a thousand persons sat down to supper, while at least as many more were promenading and partaking of refreshments at the *buffets*. This spacious and richly adorned palace has been built within three months, and the great banqueting-hall within the last ten days. The royal persons

entered about eleven o'clock, and seemed to get confused or separated in the crush of the entrance-hall, the Crown-Prince of Prussia and the Princess of the Netherlands being left standing in the crowd, the former apparently a good deal out of temper, while the Khédive, as if he had forgotten something, literally ran out of the hall, and immediately afterwards re-entered, leading the Empress of the French. A little later, the royal party promenaded through the rooms, the procession headed by the Empress of the French and the Emperor of Austria. The Empress's dress was of the newly-invented colour whose name we forget, but which may be described as a sort of dark cherry colour. Again she looked lovely, and again bowed and smiled graciously to all around. Her popularity here is growing into a *furor*—so pleasing is an obvious desire to please, especially when displayed by a woman of almost the most perfect beauty as well as the most exalted rank. The company, in one respect, presented a very unusual aspect. There were something like fifty gentlemen to one lady, which, in spite of the great variety of national costumes, robbed the scene of a good deal of the gaiety that properly belonged to it. The main causes of this were that the guests invited from foreign countries were almost exclusively gentlemen, and that the blinded natives of these parts do not take their wives and daughters to balls, but lock them up at home. All Egypt had been scoured for ladies, but few were to be found out of the families of Frenchmen connected with the Canal, and the result was not satisfactory as to either quantity or (with the

proper exceptions) quality. One consequence was, that few persons very earnestly desired to dance ; still fewer could find room in which to perform, though the ceremony was duly gone through. For sundry reasons, the refreshment and supper room was a very favourite resort. At the *buffets*, every conceivable kind of refreshment, liquid and solid, and all of the highest quality, was served out in boundless profusion. The supper, presided over by the Khédive, with the Empress by his side, was superb, both in show and in reality—as may be seen :—

MENU—

Grandes Pièces,	{ Poisson à la réunion des deux mers. Roast Beef à l'Anglaise. Galantine de Dinde à la Périgueux. Jambon historié. Grand pain de gibier en bastion. Galantine de Faisans à la Valière.
Entrées,.....	{ Patés de gibier à la d'Orsay. Langues de bœuf à l'Anglaise. Aspics de Nérae. Galantines de cailles au belle vue. Filets à l'Impériale.
Salades,.....	{ Crevettes de Suez au cresson. Truffes au vin de Champagne. Salade Russe. Asperges d'Italie à l'huile vierge.
Rôti,.....	{ Cuissot de Chevreuil à St Hubert. Dindonneaux truffés. Faisans au cresson. Châpons garnies de cailles.
Entremets,.....	{ Macédoines au kirschwasser. Pudding diplomate à l'ananas. Biscuits de Savoie décorés. Napolitain historié. Glacé, Pièces Montées, Dessert Assorti.

All these good things, with every variety of wine, were served to a thousand persons in superabundance, comfort, and elegance. The cost of this magnificent ball must have been

enormous—sufficient really to complete several miles of the Canal in honour of whose completion it was given.

This morning, the order is, steam up, and off to Suez, though there is a probability that we shall not go farther to-night than the Bitter Lakes. There is also a probability, according to the prophets of evil, that the whole fleet will come to grief within a few miles, and that only those of us that are in light ships will ever reach Suez by water. All that can be safely said is, that to-day will be a severer test of the undertaking than the trial of the 17th, out of which it has not come altogether triumphant.

VI.

FROM ISMAILIA TO SUEZ.

CAIRO, November 25, 1869.

THE prophets of evil are so far, which is very far, belied. Shortly after midday on Saturday, 20th November, 1869, a fleet of great vessels of all nations, coming from the Mediterranean, ran into the Red Sea at Suez, and all felt that the East and the West were wedded. The southern portion of the Canal, which, we were told on all hands, was the most imperfect, and would present the greatest difficulties, has proved the most advanced in workmanship, and the simplest in navigation. The Suez Canal is ready for the passage of vessels of about 18 feet draught, and at a comparatively small additional cost of time and money will be available for vessels of 4, or even 6, feet more. That is the sum of the whole matter so far as any summation can at present be made.

But do not let it be supposed, on the one hand, that this passage has been completed without difficulty and even disaster ; or, on the other hand, that all those difficulties attach to the navigation under ordinary circumstances. There were many stoppages and misfortunes, but the great bulk of them arose from a long line of vessels proceeding in close succession,

necessarily at a slow rate, which did not leave them sufficient steering power, and which necessarily at each impediment met or created by any vessel in front deprived all behind of any steering power whatever. Thus, a vessel in front, from whatever cause, came to a stand; the next behind could not, of course, continue going ahead, nor could it go astern, because another was coming on or standing still behind; so helms became useless, and every vessel behind the impediment was placed at the mercy of the slightest wind or current. There lay the cause of at least nine-tenths of the accidents and delays. When there were no stoppages in front, and an amount of speed, to the rate, say, of five knots an hour, could be maintained, every vessel found the passage perfectly easy, and all went on prosperously.

There is, of course, room for a considerable amount and variety of improvements on the Canal; but, looking at what has been done, there is nothing formidable in what remains to do—and care must be taken not to ascribe to defects in construction incidents which arose from the very peculiar and never to be repeated circumstances under which the Canal was first navigated. Of all this there was ample evidence during the two days' voyage, through the southern half of the Canal, from Ismailia to Suez—and here it must be mentioned that the latter half of the passage was thus divided into two days in order that the last fifteen or twenty miles might be run on the morning of the 20th, against a spring-tide coming in from the Red Sea, ~~and~~ so enabling us to effect the difficult combination of slow motion and sufficient steer-

ing power. The sight on the morning of the 19th, after the day of gorgeous celebration at Ismailia, sufficed to admonish us as to what wonders have been already worked, and so give assurance as to what may remain to do. There lay a bright and even well-built town, with its palaces and towers, where but a few months ago there were only a howling wilderness and the tents of roving Arabs. Here, in a beautiful and capacious sea-basin, though fifty miles from either sea, rides a great fleet, which has come hither from the farthest ports of Europe—and that grand roadstead was but the other day, what it had been for countless ages before, a muddy swamp. A few miles further on, the traveller by the Canal enters into a sea—the “Bitter Lakes”—twenty-five miles long, and may talk with friends, as we did on the spot, who, only two or three years ago, had gone over the bed of that sea on horseback, and with thankfulness for the hard ground. In this enterprise, sea has been made land—and land has been made sea. The arrangements of nature have been reversed; man has said to the sea, Thus far shalt thou come, and thus far shalt thou go back—and for once he has been obeyed.

But at the beginning of each day's voyage difficulties crowded in—and indeed in all cases, it could almost be said, that it was only the first step that there was any difficulty about—“*ce n'est que le premier pas qui coute.*” This arose from the difficulty of the vessels passing from their anchorage in their allotted order, keeping, so to say, step with the others, and getting into the prescribed rate of steaming.

There was a malicious pleasure in perceiving that, almost without exception, the British vessels, unhappily very few in number, were the least disobedient and obstructive—next to them the Swedes and Danes. Most foreigners showed themselves both ambitious and ill-handled, pushing in before their turn, only with the result of getting into grief, which they often expressed with an undignified and unseamanlike loudness. The Egyptian Government vessel on which we were quartered behaved decently well, but fared ill. Shortly after entering the Canal, a worse-managed vessel in front rather suddenly stuck fast, and swung right across the fairway. We could not go ahead without running into her; we could not go astern without running into another vessel; there were only two courses open to us—to ground on the starboard or on the port side, and Fate chose the latter. Once more our excellent Arab captain cursed the Canal and all concerned therein, especially those present on this occasion—but nevertheless we remained high, and on one side almost dry. Then the *Pelouse*, a vessel of the Austrian Lloyd's, having on board their mightinesses the directors of the Suez Canal Company, attempted to pass, and fouled the British vessel *Rapid*, whereon there was bitter laughter from all beholders, excepting those immediately behind, who suddenly found themselves thrown back upon one another. It looked very like the beginning of the end for the day; and several desperate devices were resorted to in the hope of rescue—perhaps none so desperate as that of at least one Egyptian captain, who began pitching over his coals, oblivious, even in the

teaching circumstances of the moment, that in such matters there is a difference between Canal and sea, and that he was making a sort of artificial reef between himself and the deep from which he had strayed. For those at and behind this point, the chance of "assisting" at Suez seemed very faint. But for some of us there was help at hand, or at least only a mile or two ahead. Our deplorable position was observed by Mr John Pender, having charge, on behalf of the British Indian Telegraph Company, of the good ship Hawk, which is to be employed in landing the shore-end of the cable with which the Great Eastern has gone round the Cape. He kindly sent back a boat for the rescue of shipwrecked friends. But the Hawk herself had to move on in her order in the procession; steam, even half-steam, beats oars; a stern-chase is a long chase; and at last arose the dismal suspicion that our friend, with bed, board, and lodging, was running away from us, in revenge for our having somewhat failed to back him up at the late contest for Linlithgowshire. But again came help, and from another quarter. The British gunboat Newport threw us a rope, and gave not only the utmost courtesy and hospitality, but a valuable opportunity of comparing, with the bungling and confusion we had left, the skill, order, quietness, cleanliness, discipline, and vigilance of a well-appointed British war vessel. Under such circumstances, there was also improved opportunity to observe the scenes and things we were passing through. The scene is but a desert, but he who has seen the sun set in the desert, with the vast surface unbroken by any

object except perhaps a camel stalking solemnly along, mounted by a Bedouin, with his long firelock, passing away into the darkness and desolation, will never say that even in the desert all is barren, or at least that all barrenness is without beauty—beauty of its own, which gives to the human beholder a feeling of insignificance, heart-sinking, and dread.

It is more to the present purpose to say that at this portion of the Canal—*i. e.*, between Lake Timsah or Ismailia and the Bitter Lakes—the banks of the Canal seemed on the whole better finished and more durable than on the northern section. The soundings, too, were favourable. There was none lower than 21 feet at the passage out of Lake Timsah into the Canal, though there occurred the “stramash” among vessels the deepest of which drew 7 feet less. At Serapeum, whence had come the evil rumour of a shallow caused by an unblasted rock, you could pass in about 16 feet, though a sounding a yard or two beyond the paddle-box gave only 12 or 13 feet. At dusk, with the mountains of Arabia in full view, we pass into the north end of the Bitter Lakes, to-day a deep and rolling sea, in which the waters of the Mediterranean and Red Sea have mixed—yesterday, an arid plain. The soundings throughout this new sea were very favourable—seldom below 28 feet, and often above 30. Nor are these soundings confined to the buoyed channel through which the navigation is to pass; excepting at a few places, the navigable depth extends to a considerable distance on both sides. Indeed, excepting for a short distance at each end, the course of the Canal through the Lake has not

been dredged, but only sounded and buoyed—it is only the natural depth, if we could call anything natural where all is artificial. The value of this amount of spare sea-room will be appreciated when it is considered that, owing to the great expanse, the wind will tell more heavily on vessels here than at any other part of the route, occasionally rendering it impracticable to keep a course defined throughout to within a very few feet.

At dark, artillery announced that the *Empress* of the French and the other royal personages had anchored for the night, about two-thirds through the Bitter Lakes—and so did we all, including the now ensnared *Hawk*, and even some of the vessels which had been left in trouble at the exit from Lake Timsah. Two or three hours afterwards, the *Empress* of the French, always thoughtful and graceful in her courtesies, gave a reception on board her yacht to the captain and two officers of each vessel of the fleet. The opinion of the visitors on board the *Hawk* was worth having—for among them were not only members of both Houses of Parliament, and eminent merchants and shippers, but the two greatest authorities of the day in that branch of engineering—Mr Hawkshaw and Mr Bateman. That night there was unanimity in the opinion that the thing was done, unless the remaining few miles showed mistakes and obstructions of which as yet there had been no sign.

On the morning of the fourth and last day, the same sort of difficulties as on previous occasions was experienced in getting under way; but once started, we went on easily and gaily.

The weather was magnificent, as it had been throughout, and all were joyful in the conviction that we were about to be the first witnesses of and for the success of an enterprise whose possibility the world had doubted, and whose effects on the world's future are not yet to be calculated. On both sides stretched the desert, but not now unbounded, for on one side were seen the mountains of Arabia, on the other the range of Mount Sinai, in front the shining waters of the Red Sea. Now would ride along the banks officers of the Viceroy, with flowing robes and flashing arms; now would stalk not ungracefully past a couple of Nubians, mother-naked, and not ashamed. But our business was and is with the banks and soundings. Everybody had everywhere been told that here both of these would be found the worst; they were found the best, the banks are better sloped, and better finished than anywhere else; and moreover, are to a large extent faced with stone. It was indeed to be taken into account that this part of the Canal will be subjected occasionally to considerable currents caused by high tides in the Red Sea (such a current was running in at the rate of about four miles an hour when we passed, and greatly assisted the steering); but the banks as a whole seem even now almost fit for anything they may have to sustain, and are daily being made fitter. The soundings throughout were among the best got, averaging about 28 feet, and the minimum keeping above 20. The "rock-cutting" at the place called Khartouf, which was long a bugbear, is made through soft white sandstone, and appears to be one of the best finished pieces of work throughout the

whole distance. Now were seen the flag-covered masts of the vessels in the harbour of Suez ; and the thunder of artillery announced that the head of the procession, the French Empress leading, had passed into the Red Sea, and completed the first water journey across the African Continent.

It was soon after noon on Saturday the 20th November, that the foremost vessels of the fleet passed without pause or impediment out of the land and into open sea. Here and there crowds were assembled on the banks between the town and port, and as each vessel passed, volleys of cheers were given and returned. Those cheers were no mere ceremonies. It was impossible not to feel that a moment of no light interest in the history of the world had arrived—that at that moment we were witnessing an event whose consequences would be felt through ages to come. We could not say that we were

"the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea."

But we were the first that had ever come into that sea from the other sea by ships passing across the land—showing a new way for the commerce of the Old World, and bringing East and West 8000 miles nearer to each other. It could not be but that even the least sentimental of us should have been "glad with grave thoughts," and have felt that in that hour there was more to be seen, by the mind's eye, than the gorgeous and glittering displays of the rejoicing of many nations which flouted the sky from sea and shore.

What then, or how much, was proved to be

accomplished by the prosperous completion of this memorable voyage overland from sea to sea? Chiefly and certainly, that a ship canal has been formed from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea, fitted and now ready for the transit of vessels of 16 or 18 feet draught; and also, as bearing on future deepening, that only about 5 per cent. of the soundings are under 24 feet. As to the soundings, that is the result to be reported to the Canal Company by the directors who have accompanied this expedition, and it is a result borne out by others of the most carefully taken soundings. Thus, of about 90 soundings made by Mr Ashbury's famous yacht, the "Cambria," the lowest was 21 feet, and only 11 showed less than 25 feet. That is not so much as M. de Lesseps undertook, and as he may yet achieve, but it is a great deal, and not far short of all that is really wanted for ordinary purposes. Owing partly to rough and incorrect conversions of French into English measures, statements have gained acceptance to the effect that M. de Lesseps had promised a depth of 28 English feet, with admission for vessels of $26\frac{1}{2}$ feet—the real figures being about 26 and $24\frac{1}{2}$. At least one vessel of $18\frac{1}{2}$ feet draught, a Swedish frigate, passed from end to end without feeling any difficulty from want of depth or from anything but her neighbours; and it must always be kept in mind that, owing to the crowding and the slow pace, and to the fact that an accident to one vessel made danger and difficulty to every vessel behind, the difficulty of keeping in mid-channel was immensely greater than it will be under ordinary circumstances. The same remark applies, of course,

to the question of breadth—there is already breadth as well as depth for vessels of 18 feet to steam through, though not for their passing each other. Doubtless the Canal would be better if it were both broader and deeper ; but meanwhile it is sufficiently broad and deep for vessels of the extreme draught really required for the route. No doubt there are some people who will not believe this—conspicuously the Peninsular and Oriental Company, whose vessels declined to come beyond Ismailia, though in fact the worst was then over—thus leaving our great Indian transit company unrepresented at the final triumph. There has throughout been a sort of vague impression that, unless the Canal were made to the full depth undertaken by M. de Lesseps, it would be “a failure,” and of little use. But let us look at the facts—at the real requirements. The vessels of the Peninsular and Oriental Company are on the whole the largest vessels trading between Europe and the Mediterranean, and only two or three of these reach 3000 tons burthen. Messrs Bibby, of Liverpool, now the great carriers of goods between England and these regions, have two or three vessels of that tonnage ; and there is no doubt a tendency at present to increase the size of steam-vessels as economising the cost of carriage. It has not been found difficult to build vessels of 3000 tons, drawing only 20 feet when loaded ; but it may be admitted that the Canal cannot for a considerable time be made fit for vessels of that tonnage—a fact which derives additional importance from the prevailing inclination to increase of size. But there are some facts to

be set off on the other side. In the first place, the average tonnage of vessels trading between this country and the Mediterranean is certainly much below 1500 tons, while the remainder of the carriage to India, from Suez, is performed in vessels of a still smaller class. In the second place, the vessels trading to the Mediterranean, and especially those of the largest class, carry goods not going beyond the Mediterranean ports, as well as goods for India; so that their tonnage does not correctly indicate the tonnage really required for trade to India through the Canal. Thus, it will be seen that the fact of a portion of the trade to the East being carried on in vessels of greater draught than the Canal will at present admit, is of very little importance, and that the Canal is really fit for vessels of as great a size as would be likely to use it even were its dimensions much greater. The question then arises whether, in the economy of time and money, the Canal will offer sufficient inducement for vessels going through, as against the competition of the railway. The present cost of unshipping, railing, and re-shipping is, as nearly as we could learn, about 28s. per ton. The cost for transit through the Canal, adding to the transit-duty of 8s., 2s. for pilotage and lighting, will be 10s. per ton. Besides the loss of time and risk of damage in handling, to be put against the railway, this leaves a balance in favour of the Canal of 18s. a ton, which is about a fourth of the whole present rate of freight, by the overland route, between Bombay and Liverpool.

The question of durability—that is, of the Canal remaining as good as it is, even though no effort is made to widen and deepen, is not so

easily to be dealt with. Some of the main facts can be but superficially observed by the visitor, and some of the natural influences greatly affecting the results are as yet unmeasured by the scientific, and beyond their experience. In most places, the banks seem scarcely up to their work, even should their work prove to be no greater than has yet been experienced. But that defect may be supposed to be to a great extent remediable at no intolerable cost. In his Report in 1863, Mr Hawkshaw gave an opinion that the slope under water should be at least three to one. The actual slope varies very much ; but certainly in many places it falls far short of Mr Hawkshaw's requirements. It depends much on the nature of the soil at the particular spot how much evil may result from this defect ; and it may possibly appear, though there is at present no possibility of learning, that the defective slopes have been indulged in only where the soil permitted of a departure from the ordinary requirement. The effect of the moving sands of the desert is now lightly estimated, and not held as beyond the check of a moderate amount of dredging. Another influence, scarcely foreseen, is the strong inset from high tides in the Red Sea, bringing in sand through about twenty miles at the south end. This looks formidable ; but the current has also some beneficial action ; and the opinion of the engineers seems to be that, according to the very little as yet known or conjecturable, there will be here a pretty equal balance of good and evil. Mr Hawkshaw's former estimate was, that the Canal, once made, could be maintained for about £60,000

a-year; and we are not aware that he would now increase his estimate, at least were the Canal thoroughly finished on the original scale and plan. Meanwhile, a great French contractor offers to uphold the undertaking in its present state for £40,000 a-year, and that must be held as a strong piece of evidence, though the history of the construction of the Canal has not promoted the belief in contractors' words or figures.

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The question as to future improvements and extensions is a question of money; ~~and as to money, the Canal has been a delusion, and is likely to be a failure.~~ The original estimate was four millions sterling; then eight millions; the cost has been something above sixteen millions; and a certain or uncertain number of millions more are required to complete the design. But it must be understood that not more than a half of the sixteen millions has gone to pay for the actual work. The other half has gone chiefly in the two departments of "administration" and interest. French administration, even when nobody is overpaid, is always top-heavy as to numbers; and in Egypt, "baksheesh," which means beggary, bribery, presents, plunder, either or all, is universal and unavoidable. The ordinary shareholders have, up to this time, been paid 5 per cent. on their capital—have been taking profits when none were made; and after this time will receive no more interest—probably no more for ever. They think it hard; but people cannot both eat off their heads and have their heads. The Viceroy, by far the largest shareholder, some years ago gave up his claim to interest,

but will come in again if the Canal is an interest-paying concern thirty years after its opening. Besides the ordinary shareholders, there are a class of preference shareholders, receiving, or stipulating to receive, an annual payment at a rate which will extinguish capital and interest in ~~twenty~~ *thirty* five years. The opinion of engineers, as we gather it, is that four or five millions more would put the Canal to rights, and make it all that it was intended to be. This would raise the total capital or cost to 20 or 21 millions. There was some little straining even in the figures which showed that the traffic would pay a good dividend on a capital of eight millions. There would therefore appear to be no chance for dividends on a capital of much more than twice that amount. But, when all the facts come to be narrowly looked at, the case does not seem quite so bad as on a first glance. Of the original eight millions, only four millions were subscribed in the market; the other four were supplied by the Viceroy. An additional four millions were obtained by preference stock bearing 9 per cent. interest for thirty-five years, both capital and interest to be then extinguished. The Khédive further paid in about three millions, awarded under the arbitration in his dispute with the company about labour. An additional million of stock was added lately, chiefly by means of a lottery. This makes the capital or cost about sixteen millions. But as the Khédive has waived, for thirty years from the commencement of the undertaking, his claim for interest on the four millions sterling he originally paid in, and

as no interest is payable upon what he gave under the arbitration, the real amount of capital on which interest must be, or ought to be, paid, is only eight or nine millions, of which, however, four millions bear 9 per cent. There is also, of course, the Khédive's claim for interest beginning to run about twenty-five years hence ; but that need not be taken into account, as shortly after that time the payment of 9 per cent. interest to the preference shareholders will cease, and their four millions be held as repaid. What, then, is the prospect of the traffic paying interest on a capital of eight or nine millions ? That is a very difficult question ; but almost no calculation shows the case to be hopeless. Three vessels, of an average burthen of 1500 tons, passing each way per day would pay handsomely.

If the additional money is to be raised, it will only be by some sort of guaranteed stock. Money is at present plentiful in the European market, and just possibly the thing may be done. But we may expect to see a strong effort made to get the Canal improved and finished by money grants from several European Governments ; and, as possessors of India, we are likely to be asked to take the position of chief contributors. The proposal is not one likely to commend itself to the British mind, even had that mind not been possessed all along with a more or less unreasonable aversion to the Canal, even as made at the cost of other people. But, looking at the ultimate if not immediate necessity for something more being done, at the certainty of the beneficial effect, and at the undoubted fact that a further increase of expen-

diture is the likeliest, if not the only, chance of any return being ever obtained for the expenditure already made—there can be little doubt that whatever is wanted will somehow be got.

Here, though the matter is only parenthetical, it must be interesting to mention that, even before the success of the Suez Canal through all its length was fully ascertained, the Khédive, with characteristic promptitude and energy, resolved on another great work of a similar kind. On Thursday, at Ismailia, half-way through, he gave instructions to Mr Hawkshaw to proceed immediately with preparations for the canalisation of all the Cataracts of the Nile. In 1865, Mr Hawkshaw was directed to report on the canalisation of the first cataract, and reported that the work was quite practicable at the cost of about £250,000. That work is now to be set about immediately ; and the other four cataracts will be similarly dealt with as soon as Mr Hawkshaw (who meanwhile has to proceed to some great works of the same kind in Holland) shall have reported on the mode and cost. The mode, it may be assumed, will be in each case a diverging canal, with locks ; and it is not anticipated that there will be any considerable difficulty. When this work is completed—and it will not occupy any very considerable time—there will, even at “low Nile,” be unimpeded navigation for vessels drawing eight feet of water for a distance of 1400 miles up the river. Thus one good breeds another ; example stimulates ; experience leads ; and our works, as well as our thoughts, are “widened by the process of the suns.”

That night, Suez and its port—the former a



strange, wild, wicked little town, peopled of the East, but seeking maintenance as an epitome of all the vices of the West in their grossest forms—were in a blaze and roar of rejoicing. Every house, besides being festooned with flags, “blazed with light and brayed with minstrelsy.” The best piece of work in illumination throughout Egypt—and they have been endless in number and variety—was that of the railway company at their station at the port, about four miles below the town of Suez: a long line of arches, with a great gate and tower in the middle, all outlined with brilliant variegated lamps. Outside in the roadstead lay a great fleet, each vessel lighted up along every spar, and almost every rope, to the utmost peak, and sending up for hours volleys of rockets, which fell back in showers of many-coloured stars. In-doors, or more literally speaking, on deck, the general feeling found more articulate though less demonstrative expression. Perhaps nowhere were the convivialities more worthy the occasion than on board the “Hawk.” Mr Pender presided—Mr Elliot, M.P. for North Durham, at the other end. “The Queen,” of course, came first; and we were all more than ordinarily glad to shout for our own Sovereign, when almost all other Sovereigns were cutting so much better a figure in the proceedings. Then the Chairman gave “The Khédive of Egypt,” lauding him for his great efforts in the work of civilisation. Then “France, the Emperor, and the Empress,” to which a French naval captain replied with characteristic fluency and vivacity. Lord Houghton, in a thoughtful and graceful speech, gave “Success to the Suez Canal, and the good

health of M. de Lesseps," who had shown himself a man of genius both in the daring of the conception and the energy of the execution. The Hon. Thomas Bruce proposed "The Chairman," as the leading spirit in the work of extending and improving telegraphic communication with the East. Mr Bateman proposed "The Health of Mr Hawkshaw," saying that he must be a proud man that day to see his prophecies fulfilled ; and Mr Hawkshaw replied that, having now sailed or steamed through the Canal, over the ground of which he had ridden only a few years ago, he would not have wished to alter anything in his Report had he known as much six years ago as he knew and had seen now. Mr Gregory, M.P., was so hard driven as to propose "The Press," professing much anxiety to obtain the valuable opinion of the gentlemen connected therewith upon this great undertaking. (Mr Gregory is an Irishman, and "the man for Galway." In reply, we could have promised him that the opinions, whether or not valuable, would be found delightfully various, so that he and all others might pay their penny and take their choice.) Mr Pender proposed the Captain of the Hawk, Mr Briscoe, a true gentleman as well as an excellent seaman, who spoke to the point in saying that he would rather take a vessel through the Suez Canal a hundred times than up the London river once. In such testimonies by those who have tried, almost as much as in the opinions and calculations of engineers who have come to see, may be read success, adequate now, complete hereafter.

VII.

CLOSING SCENES AT CAIRO.

CAIRO, November 25, 1869.

The experiences of Sunday the 21st November, when it was necessary (mark, necessary) to journey from Suez to Cairo, would, as a judgment upon Sunday travelling, have rejoiced the heart of Dr Candlish, and confirmed him in the error of his ways—or rather of his precepts, as broadly distinguished from his ways. Everybody in the fleet had to get up shortly after four o'clock, and find a way, breakfastless and in the dark, by small boats, to the railway station, four miles distant. The mass of the visitors were there about an hour and a-half before the announced time of starting; but already almost every seat was filled, and the air rang with quarrels and complaints. This might seem a good reason for starting the train even before the time, and another as soon after as might be safe and possible. But that would not have been in accord with the Egyptian way of viewing things. The officer in charge, seeing matters in such a desperate condition, retired for an hour or so to smoke, and deliberate on the chance that fate might find a solution, of which he saw no prospect. The prematurely-filled train chose—for really the engine seemed

to have no master, but to go or stand still at its pleasure—to move off an hour after its proper time, and about three hours after the carriages had been filled. Fully half of the intending travellers were left behind, imprecating those who had “been before them.” At the last moment, a locked compartment, apparently reserved for some illustrious visitors, was filled chiefly by ruffianly persons (some of them, we are pained to say, connected with the press), precipitating themselves through the windows, presenting, as they disappeared, a spectacle most offensive to the dignitaries who had made too sure of having the seats for themselves. One of these—a British Peer, of benevolent character, but not of quiescent temperament—delivered his sentiments upon this proceeding from the platform, and in at the window of the desecrated compartment; and everybody listened in respectful silence, without moving; our own withers were unwrung, and we took none of the remarks as personal, not having shared in the outrage of climbing in at the window, but having walked in at the door in the most gentlemanly possible manner, by aid of a false key borrowed from a friend’s valet. It would be hard to say whether those who did or those who could not get away were most to be pitied. For eleven mortal hours, the unbreakfasted victors went creeping, and stopping, and backing through the desert till nearly maddened with sand, and thirst, and heat, and hunger. There were indeed strange sights to be seen around, but no man could look anywhere but inwards. About three o’clock we reached a place called Zagazig, where the

Viceroy had provided a splendid luncheon for about 200 ; but several other trains having now overtaken us, about 1500 persons precipitated themselves on the feast. There arose a famine in Egypt. Also, a fight—what the Americans call, “a free fight,” in which everybody may, if he likes, fight against everybody else. On this occasion, this was what we all did like, or found necessary—and the scene was worth seeing, though we would rather not have seen it. There, see, is the Earl of Dudley and Ward, one of the richest and also most luxurious men in the world, engaged in a ferocious single combat for a halfpenny loaf of bread, which he is triumphantly carrying off, when the vanquished foe spitefully “bonnets” him from behind, and a waiter coming up in front pours upon the lordly bosom a copious libation of gravy, “which to the hem did of his garments go.” For the horrors of this middle passage, there was felt to be scarcely compensation even in the wonderful change of scene as we passed out of the Desert into the Delta—out of the most barren into the most fertile region of the earth—and, as we crept nearer to Cairo, beheld the deep-red sun setting behind the Pyramids.

At Cairo there was a fierce renewal of the struggle for existence—partly for food, but even more for rest. Thousands of people were disgorged within a few minutes upon a city almost every hotel in which was already overpacked. All available carriages were picked up by people who had had the good fortune to have friends to engage and take possession of them. The streets or roads round the station were dark, though the more central parts of the town were

blazing in illumination. Hundreds of Arabs, however, were yelling around, offering to carry portmanteaus, on the terms of about a month's wages, prepaid. The only mode of conveyance was by donkeys, and the supply of donkeys was very far from adequate to the demand. Those were lucky who got mounted and set off on donkey-back on a vague and dismal search for a place of rest. Such good fortune befel a not undistinguished British Peer, who had announced that he was coming, but did not find that the announcement had produced any substantial advantage. His Lordship, though a very superior person, got on a rather inferior donkey, and was proceeding on his way with all the dignity that the circumstances permitted, when, apparently from unskilful donkeyship, rider and steed rolled over in the sand—donkey up. The streets of Cairo presented that night a strange mixture of splendour and squalor, of rejoicing and misery. The whole population were rejoicing, or at least parading the streets, gazing at the displays of rejoicing—a squalid mob walking through many miles of blazing illuminations and tens of thousands of flags, the sky above them crackling and sparkling with almost unintermitting flights of rockets. There also were hundreds if not thousands of visitors from far countries, mounted on donkeys, and each followed by a mob of yelling Arabs carrying the luggage in very small divisions, begging from door to door for a place in which to lay their weary heads. For hours, all was bumps, yells, quarrels, and curses. The Cairo donkeys have a wonderful skill in threading their way through tight places, but with the

serious defect of making allowance only for their own breadth, and not for the projecting legs and shoulders of those who bestride them. The streets being of sand, the approach even of carriages, much less of donkeys, is not to be detected by sound ; and one is not long in Egypt before he sees that there is truth in the statement of some travellers, that the majority of the natives have only one eye, and a moiety of the remainder none at all, whilst the slender remnant are saved only through the compromise of being blear-eyed. Riding through such streets and such a population, amid cross lights, and on a tottering donkey, is no easy piece of pleasuring—especially if you ride above 16 stones, and, though not at all short-tempered, are somewhat short-sighted, and have had your spectacles smashed in the fray. On all hands, rising even above the unceasing yells of the Arabs, were heard remonstrances and curses in all European tongues—the frequent French *sucre* mingling, or rather contending, at every step with the deeper and heartier curse by which Englishmen everywhere reveal their nationality. By about midnight, almost everybody was housed in some way or another. The Hotel du Sphinx, a hostelry somewhat difficult to find, but well worth finding, gave shelter to one party of the Viceroy's guests, who will be ever grateful for the welcome and good cheer to which, as the hotel was not one of those engaged by the Government, they had no claim but need ; but thousands of persons, seeking and expecting pleasures, found the most miserable day of their experience followed by the most miserable night. All day in the unpopulated

desert—all night in populated beds. And yet the Viceroy had done his utmost—whatever money could buy was lavishly bestowed ; but money cannot overcome in a day the difficulty of housing many thousands of strangers in a city where the dwellings and habits of the natives render almost all of it but the hotels practically as houseless as the desert.

There was a great ball, too, that night, at one of the Viceroy's palaces ; but, as the day was Sunday, we cannot, though advocating morning and evening trains, and Christian liberty generally, report from personal observation. Those reprobates who, unrestrained by such scruples, countenanced the desecration, paid £3 or £4 each for cabs, and came back to report that the affair was on the whole a failure, at least as compared with the splendid assembly at Ismailia. The Empress had gone home to France ; the other royal visitors stayed only a short time ; the supper was not so superb ; the rooms, though larger, were not so tasteful ; and though there was room to dance, that was mainly because many people stayed away. There were two compensations, in a larger proportion of ladies, and the presence of Sir Samuel and Lady Baker, delayed on their hereafter famous expedition up the Nile, by means of which Sir Samuel undertakes to make all things new and right throughout all the habitations of horrid cruelty.

Cairo was *en fête* for five days—and perhaps Cairo is best seen in that condition. It is a place illustrating very strikingly the good and the evil, or at least the defect, of the somewhat hurried and superficial civilisation which has

been forced upon Egypt. One portion of the city—that most exposed to the gaze of strangers—is in all respects a very good imitation of a great Belgravian Square ; almost all the rest is, as to paving, lighting, cleaning, and especially *cornering*, one vast congeries of Galashielses. There is, however, one advantage in those narrow and overhung streets, with their eccentric twists and divergences—they make sure of shade somewhere at all times of the day. Even the meanest of those dark and musty alleys had on this occasion its flags and its lamps, and the effect, though incongruous, was not without its beauty. On Monday, there were races about seven miles from the city, at which the Khédive and his royal guests were present, and at which all invited visitors found every accommodation and hospitality. The course was bare of turf—chiefly a layer of loose sand on a hard bottom—and could not be considered as heavy for the horses, seeing that several of the races were three miles. There were several trials between English and Arab horses, in which the English were successful ; and, moreover, in almost every case, the English jockeys, on whatever mounted, beat the Arab and negro jockeys. The most novel sight was some dromedary races ; but they are not interesting, as the animals seem to get into their top speed at once, and not to vary the rate of going, so that the result is a hollow thing long before they approach the winning-post. The road homewas a wonderful sight—enough of European persons, horses, and carriages to make it look like a return from the Derby, but with additions of camels, donkeys, and mules, and of masses of

people of all colours and strange garbs, which, to use a sort of Irishism, made it look like something that nobody ever saw before.

On Tuesday, there was a little business—the Mayor of Manchester went up before the Khédive, to present an address from the corporation of Cottonopolis. The Mayor made a short speech at the presentation, complimenting the Viceroy on his efforts for the improvement and civilisation of his own country, and for his generous treatment of other countries; and remarked, in reference to the Canal, that Egypt had been famous for great works of old, but was now likely to be famous for works which to greatness united utility. In a subsequent conversation, the Viceroy remarked to the Mayor that the Canal would probably require to be widened and deepened, and indicated a hope that in that work some aid might be expected from the English commercial community. His Highness had an eye to business, and it is not known whether the Mayor came to the point, and showed himself equal to the occasion.

A large portion of the same day was devoted by many of the visitors, great and small, to the Pyramids. The scene was not more new to the visitors than the visitors to the scene—never before were these mysterious monuments visited after such a fashion and by such a multitude. In the means of reaching them, there was that mixture of careful and even excessive preparation with gross neglect which prevails in almost everything all over the country. The first half of the road, though lying through a populous district, and indeed

through a continuous town, is execrable ; the second half, through lying through a desert, is excellent. Twisting through all manner of tortuosities, and steering past every variety of pit-fall, the Nile—flowing along in vast expanse, and with an impressive aspect of power and majesty—is reached at old Cairo, and has to be crossed under great difficulties and in some little danger. There are, even on this morning of sudden and excessive demand, an abundant supply of boats at the ferry, but all of them in the last stages of craziness, their timbers rotten, and their sails in rags. A vast crowd was assembled at the point of embarkation in dire confusion—a great many hundreds of Europeans wishing to get to the Pyramids, a good many thousands of guides, boatmen, donkeys, and donkey-boys, competing with yells and blows for the honour and profit of carrying or accompanying them. There seemed to be nothing in the way of police, or, if there were any officers there with the mission of preserving order, they were undistinguishable from the worst of the mob either by dress or behaviour. There were no sort of gangways or planks for getting into the boats ; both bipeds and quadrupeds had to jump. And where were they to jump ? The boatmen of one boat invaded other boats, in order to keep the intending passengers, with their accompanying donkeys, from getting on board ; and though the donkeys showed experience as well as agility in springing from the shore over the gunwales, they were often successfully repulsed and tumbled over into the river, their owners faithfully accompanying them, though with tears and curses. Thousands of people were speaking or

rather yelling, with the most frantic and menacing gesticulations. But they were not so busy oratorising as to neglect the use of the chief remedy for all evils and difficulties in this country—the sticks were going as vigorously and almost as loudly as the tongues. It was as if the whole population of a considerable town had taken to a sudden and simultaneous beating of carpets, except that Christian people would have shown more tenderness to their carpets than these followers of the Prophet did to each other's skins. At last, party after party of the passengers get shoved off, all feeling as if they had escaped with bare life out of a deadly conflict. For a mile or so on the other side, the road, if road it can be called, is narrow, broken, and in all respects detestable ; but when it joins a sort of royal road running from one of the palaces straight to the Pyramids, it is excellent. In this country, everything is for the rulers, a good deal for visitors, very little for the ruled ; but it is strange that the Viceroy should have left one half of a road used by almost every foreigner that enters the country in a condition whose wretchedness is only made the more obvious, and even the more intolerable, by the amount of labour and cost successfully bestowed on the other half. Straight across the six miles of desert next to the Pyramids, there now runs an excellent road, built high above the sands, and swamps, and lakes which it intersects, and planted on both sides with trees, which in two or three years will afford a grateful shade. That road was on this occasion crowded with a motley multitude, hurrying along as if they feared that the desert would

furnish room only for the first comers. There were a few carriages, and even one omnibus—all in the service apparently of personages who had come from the Pasha's palaces; but the vast majority were on donkey-back. Most of them looked very queer, and everybody seemed to think that everybody else was more ludicrous than himself—at least “by their smiling they seemed to say so.” There was something even worse than ludicrous in the sight of enormously big and heavy men bestriding the very small but sturdy donkeys indigenous here, and not unseldom were these heavy-weights enjoined by impertinent companions to reverse the position, and restore the fitness of things by dismounting and carrying their little brothers. It is possible that a good modern road, shaded by trees, may hereafter detract from the aspect and the associations of the Pyramids, standing in their solemn and saddening dreariness; but great progress has been already made in that direction by the erection of a palace for the Viceroy (another yet—a seventeenth), which on this day was occupied by some royal guests, and, a little further removed, by an hotel, which will be ready in a few months or even weeks, and which is likely to be largely used by persons desiring to see sunset or sunrise from the Pyramids—a spectacle at present to be enjoyed only with great difficulty and discomfort. On this day, the scene was surveyed under circumstances rather peculiar than fitting. Never, during all their forty centuries, have the Pyramids looked down on such a sight. There were more human beings there that day than on any other day since the departure of

the doubtlessly unhappy workmen who were compelled to build them ; and a multitude of such a variety of nationalities has seldom been seen anywhere, never there. Taken individually, men and women, it is true, looked very small beneath that enormous and towering mass ; but the multitude asserted its importance by numbers, and also by noise. The "eternal silence of the desert" was utterly put to flight by the clamour of tongues, the popping of corks, and the whacking of donkeys and of Arabs. Many hundreds of persons made the ascent of the Great Pyramid, including some ladies, who had not made any proper, not to say necessary, preparations as to either their own or the Arab attendants' dresses, and who, it is to be hoped, will be more discreet next time. The ascent looks more formidable than it is, except to those liable to giddiness, and various feats were performed tending to bring the whole affair into a sort of contempt. One gentleman went to the top twice without interval, and offered to go back a third time for a bet which nobody would take ; an Arab descended from the top of the Great Pyramid and ascended to the top of the smaller one within fourteen minutes, for a very slight pecuniary consideration ; and a Highland keeper of Lord Dudley's, unaccustomed to anything but Glengarry and the Black Mount, was backed to go up faster than any Arab of the desert, and did it. Such things really form a considerable deduction from the pretensions of a pile one of whose chief claims is mere bigness.

The Pyramids have now sunk into the same position as Niagara, any description of them and the impressions they produce being regarded as

impertinence, and thrice-told tediousness. We are very glad of it, at least if it were still to be held necessary to wax ecstatic about their grandeur. As Brougham in one of his speeches said of a person whom he did not admire, but could not avoid mentioning, "Not wishing to say anything disrespectful, I shall of necessity say nothing at all." Sydney Smith consoled some one who thought he had been treated slightly by Jeffrey, by saying that Jeffrey had "even been heard to speak disrespectfully of the equator"—but perhaps the world is not sufficiently advanced to tolerate such a liberty with the Pyramids. "They are very big," said Thackeray, who there dropped the subject, and went home again. If he had ventured to say more, he would probably have said that they are also very ugly and utterly useless. But perhaps their uselessness and even their ugliness are a large part of the cause of that subdued or almost reverential feeling which steals over most people who either look upon or consider them. They do not serve, they cannot be conceived ever to have served, any purpose either of utility or ornament. Then how, when, why, by whom were they built? All is mystery—and mystery is always impressive. There are hewn blocks of granite there, or at least in the adjacent tombs, which must weigh forty tons—how were they transported for more than a hundred miles and then raised into their places, otherwise than by mechanical means which nations thousands of years younger were known not to possess, and which must have perished from the knowledge of mankind before the dawn of history? Mr

Hawkshaw, we have reason to believe, estimates that a duplicate of the whole affair could be produced in England, at the present price of materials and rate of wages, for a trifle above two millions sterling. But then we possess mechanical powers a thousand times greater than any which people living thousands of years after the builders of the Pyramids are known or can be supposed to have possessed. Then as to time—all these stupendous works were mysteriously old before our time began. According to the clerical interpretation of the Mosaic record, the Pyramids must have existed before the heavens and the earth, or day and night, were created; there were mighty monarchs in Egypt, whose very memory had perished long before the popular date—so that of Egypt it may be said, as Churchill said of Edinburgh :—

"Where royalty her flag displayed
Long, long before the world was made."

Things more ancient than antiquity—pre-Creation monuments—cannot but be looked upon with amazement, if not with awe. Why they were built, is a matter that has undergone much discussion, with the result that one explanation is as good as another, and none of them good for anything. A tremendous work, for no purpose that living men can conceive—there is another element for wonder, and wonder is always more or less akin to respect or reverence. Again, who built them? Some ~~being~~ to commemorate his own name. And his name perished from among men many, many centuries ago—as righteous a case of retribution as the world has known, but at which the world only wonders the more. Another reason why the

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Pyramids attract and impress us, that, their mystery and magnitude having made them famous, their fame makes them something which men desire to see—to see not for themselves, but for their fame—not for what they are, but for what has been said about them. “And these are the Pyramids” is the thought if not the exclamation of every beholder; and in the mere fact that they are the Pyramids, whose history, builders, uses, and age have baffled human inquiries for many generations, is the source of that interest and solemnity with which they are gazed upon. You feel that to see them is an event in your life, though you cannot satisfactorily explain to yourself why it should be so. There are in the world many objects of art as well as of nature in themselves more striking, and incomparably more beautiful; but we know their what, when, why, and by whom; and so the magnifying and elevating influence of mystery is wanting. These things stand on their merits, and can be tested by standards. The Pyramids have no merits of their own, cannot be tested, and so cannot be found wanting. The same sort of influence too comes from the Sphinx, still “staring right onward,” with the gaze which, surveying those vast plains for thousands of years, has there seen unmoved the rise and fall of mightiest monarchies, and of arts, civilisations, and religions, since ever history began, and through unknown centuries before.

Little sign of any solemnising effect, however, was to be seen on the multitude of visitors as they pushed homewards from the dread presence of the Pyramids. All was hurry, scramble, and

noise, as before. Arrived again at the Nile, there was another fierce contest among the boatmen for the possession of each party of visitors and their donkeys. Taking the case of our own party, which seemed the common case, it might have been concluded that there was no chance of getting away till one or other of the sections of the combatants was dead upon the field or in the river. Almost nobody indeed struck his comrade, excepting dragomen belabouring donkey-boys, but everybody seized everybody else by the beard, and tore, and swore, and howled. The Mayor of Manchester, justly indignant at such a scene being enacted in his presence, took the stoutest stick he could find, and thumped both factions with judicial impartiality; but it was not till one faction was exhausted by the Egyptian beard-pulling in front, utterly regardless of the British whacking behind, that the fray was ended, and the boat shoved off. Our steersman had come out of the battle minus the very scanty garments with which he had gone into it, and all the way across, instead of minding his helm, as he much needed in a strong breeze and a crowded river, he narrated with graceful though over-animated gestures, and in an unknown tongue, the wrongs he had suffered and the great revenges he had taken.

On Wednesday, the Emperor of Austria, and almost all the visitors who had not gone the day before, visited the Pyramids. A story had gone abroad in Cairo that at night the Great Pyramid was to be illuminated by lime lights, and a considerable number of persons, especially persons connected with the press, resolved on a night journey to the scene. When these adventurers

had come in the dark, or rather the moonlight, within two or three miles of the Pyramids, they met the servants of the royal personages returning, concluded that the report about illumination was incorrect, and retraced their steps. When half-way across the Nile, they saw, on looking back, that the illumination was in progress—a cone of white light was dimly seen in the distance. The Pyramid was illuminated, and there was nobody there to see it.

This was not the only case in which failure and disappointment ensued from there being no appointed means of knowing what was to be done or seen ; and in every case there was the utmost difficulty in knowing where and when visitors ought to go. In a country of newspapers, those difficulties would have been easily avoided, and they were to a considerable extent overcome by other means in the case of visitors from other countries than our own. Thus, the French visitors seemed at each place to be in free communication with their Consuls, and were kept comparatively well-informed as to the programme of the proceedings ; but, though we have a Consul-General and vice-Consuls and local Consuls in Egypt, none of these functionaries appeared to think that they had any concern with their countrymen. Some of the visitors of high official and other positions humbly applied to our salaried officers for a little guidance ; but, especially at Alexandria, were so received that they did not try again. What passed we cannot tell, having acted on the idea that such officers are too great to be useful, and that the only way to escape refusal is to abstain from request ; but it is quite certain

that the bulk of the British visitors to Egypt have come back with the conviction that our Consular service holds its head a little too high and has its hands much too idle.

It is now time to be off from Cairo—the ceremonials are at end, and there are symptoms of dismantling. The lamps, the flags, the flowers, and the green boughs are being taken down, not before they had begun to show themselves the worse of wear. “The lights are fled, the garlands dead”—the guests should depart. And so they do—the hotels are emptying and the railways filling. At Alexandria, on Thursday night, the Austrian residents give a ball to their Emperor, at which the Viceroy is to be present ; but that is a comparatively small affair—and with the break-up at Cairo ends one of the most splendid, elaborate, and costly public rejoicings the world ever saw. Certainly the world never saw one similar either in features or substance. Meetings of monarchs, for purposes of rejoicing, or treaty, or alliance, have been common things, and have often been made the occasion of great spectacles, especially

“Where the gorgeous East with richest hand
Showers on her kings barbaric pearl and gold.”

But here, besides all the accompaniments of a meeting of monarchs, the princely hospitality was extended to thousands of selected men from almost all the countries of the earth. All these, from the hour they left their own countries till the hour they returned, had all things, whether of necessity or luxury, or all things that money and foresight could provide, abundantly supplied. Of course, everything was not everywhere to be had just when it was wanted—that could

not be in a country where the houses and habits of the people are so entirely different from those of the visitors, and in desert places where even water has to be carried a hundred miles. But wherever there was a failure, it was not from want of effort and expenditure, but only from the difficulty or impossibility of nicely calculating all the needs beforehand. If at one time and place, necessaries ran short, their place could be partly supplied with luxuries. In one case, the diet of the visitors on board one ship consisted, for a couple of days, of potatoes and curaçoa. Of course, too, there were unreasonable people—including gentlemen of the press, who, because they had got a cold cutlet, threatened to "crush the Canal," and gentlemen of more than one House of Legislature who protested against paying the petty incidental expenses which they would pay as a matter of course in a visit to a country-house at home. But the fact remains that the Viceroy of Egypt brought thousands of guests from Europe and America, and, as an almost unbroken rule, entertained them in unbounded luxury alike on land and sea, in city and in desert. For weeks, too, he made a whole kingdom a scene of magnificent rejoicing by day and night. If these things had been done to celebrate victory or conquest won by arms, they might still have excited wonder though not admiration; but when they have been done by the ruler of a barbarous country to celebrate a triumph won by science for commerce, civilisation, and peace, we may feel that we have been seeing something full not only of novelty and splendour, but of good and hope.

VIII.

POSITION AND PROSPECTS OF EGYPT.

EDINBURGH, December 13, 1869.

The future of Egypt, as likely to be affected by a rush of recent and coming events—such as the new submission to the Sultan, the opening of the Ship Canal, and the great annexing expedition of Sir Samuel Baker—promises to become a matter of almost as great doubt and speculation for this generation as has been her past through many generations. It is difficult to guess and dangerous to predict; but this much may be said with some safety, that there is a tendency to overrate the influences of two of the new events, and greatly to underrate the importance of a third. The acquiescence of the Viceroy in the Sultan's new conditions or limitations does not mean very much, even in words, and will come to less or to nothing in practice; it is not at all clear that the Canal will tend to enrich Egypt, however great an advantage it may be to the commerce of the world; whilst there is a very strong probability that the Baker expedition—which is in truth an expedition for conquest and annexation—may ere long go far towards doubling the size, riches, and other resources of the country, at the same time

extending some of the benefits of an imperfect civilisation, and suppressing some of the worst evils of an utter barbarism.

The firman of the Sultan, now promulgated, though somewhat large or lofty and almost insulting in tone, is so thin in substance that there ought to have been no surprise at the Viceroy quietly if not readily accepting it. There is a good deal of phrasing about "the province of Egypt," "the Sovereign of the country," and so on, intended to remind the world that theoretically Egypt is a part of Turkey and the Viceroy a deputy of the Sultan; but that language has always been used from Constantinople, and never openly objected to or contradicted at Cairo. The question is, whether any terms have now been imposed and submitted to which will prevent the Government of Egypt going on in the future much as it has in the past—that is, acknowledging the theory in forms and ceremonies, and disregarding it in almost all practical or important matters. We do not see that the position is materially altered, unless the words passing between the two parties are to be held as having much more force and effect on this occasion than even stronger and plainer words used on previous occasions. In the first place, the Sultan professes satisfaction with the eminently unsatisfactory "explanations" lately given by the Viceroy as to the increase and improvement of his army and navy, and the relations of apparent equality that he had assumed with European Sovereigns. There would have been no such profession of satisfaction had the Sultan not seen the difficulties and dangers of giving any sort of effect to his dissatisfaction. The new limitations

which the firman imposes, or rather of the "imprescriptible" existence of which it reminds the Viceroy, all relate to finance—to taxes, expenditure, and foreign loans. The limitation as to taxes imposed by the Sultan is, that "all taxes and dues must be levied and collected in my name." Two things require here to be well observed: the direction applies to all taxes, old as well as new or additional; and it is not made incumbent that the previous consent of the ~~Viceroy~~ shall be requisite for the levying of any tax whatever. Thus, the Viceroy is left as free hereafter as he is now to increase the taxation of his subjects, provided only that he levies taxes in the Sultan's name, and not in his own—by which means the Sultan will get all the odium, and the Viceroy no less revenue. It is only after the taxes have been exacted that the Sultan claims to come in and exercise some sort of control over, in the words of the firman, "the sums resulting from these taxes." In other words, the Sultan's claim is control over the expenditure, without control over the revenue. That is a very imperfect and unworkable control at the best, and we do not find from the words of the firman that there will be any attempt to work it at all. The Sultan says that he "cannot consent that the sums resulting from these taxes should be employed otherwise than for the real wants of the country;" but he does not direct or stipulate that no expenditure is to be made without his sanction, nor even indicate any means by which either he or any one but the Viceroy shall at any time or in any case decide what are "the real wants of the country." The hypothesis that the looseness and ineffectiveness of the articles of

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the firman relating to taxes and expenditure are designed, and not mere mistakes, is strongly supported by the fact that explicit, and so far effective, restrictions are placed upon the contracting of foreign loans. On that point, the words of the firman are—"Foreign loans, involving for long periods the revenues of the country, I cannot allow to be contracted without a full explanation of the reasons which make recourse to them necessary being submitted to my Imperial Government, and unless my authorisation be previously obtained." If the firman had said as much about taxes and expenditure, it would have had the meaning and force which have been hastily attributed to it, but of which it is really destitute. And even as to foreign loans, the restriction, though perhaps as tight as words can make it, is not likely to be of much avail. The necessities of the Sultan's treasury, to say nothing of the venality of his officers, has several times enabled the Viceroy to procure at Constantinople concessions much more important and unpalatable than leave to borrow in the foreign market. Again, little ingenuity would be required to overcome the restriction by evasion. Thus, the restriction is only that the Egyptian Government shall not obtain a foreign loan without the consent of the Sultan; but there is nothing to hinder it obtaining a domestic loan, even a forced one, leaving and enabling the lenders to obtain the money in the foreign market, as for themselves and not for the Government. On the whole, it does not appear that this document materially alters the relations between the Viceroy and the Sultan, or between the Viceroy

and his subjects, either for the better or the worse.

It has been too readily though quite naturally assumed that the stream of commerce to be sent through Egypt by the Canal will greatly enrich as well as benefit that land. The stream, there is very little doubt, will be a great one—very much greater than that which runs from sea to sea at present; but whether it will be a fertilising stream is quite another question. The commerce at present going through Egypt to the East undergoes transshipment and a large amount of warehousing—that is to say, Egypt is made a halting-place and depot. The great advantage of the Canal to general commerce is that vessels will pass through from Europe to the East without breaking bulk. It will be a mere road, and a road not so available for merely Egyptian purposes as the road already existing in the railways. The course of the Canal lies entirely through the desert, while the railways supply the wants of all the inhabited and productive districts. That Alexandria will suffer cannot be questioned; and it may be doubted whether Port-Said will gain all that Alexandria loses, though there may be ten ships steaming past Port-Said into the Canal for one that now unloads at Alexandria. In short, it is doubtful whether the Canal will not have a similarly injurious effect upon Egypt as railways have had upon some exceptional districts of European countries, by carrying past the traffic which there formerly lingered or was redistributed. On the other hand, have to be reckoned whatever advantages in the work of fertilising the soil may be found derivable from the fresh-water canal which the construction of

the Great Canal has necessitated. All that can be safely said at present is, that those who assume that the great work destined to benefit the world in general will in an equal or greater proportion benefit Egypt, are proceeding without much fact or even reflection.

Perhaps the most wonderful thing about the expedition of Sir Samuel Baker is, that something like it was not undertaken and accomplished several generations ago. Though none of the recent travellers through the upper regions of the Nile have inquired or remarked with a special view to the prospect of conquest or annexation, it may be gathered from the narratives of all of them without exception that the petty potentates of those regions are weak as well as vile, and that there is not perceptible any formidable obstacle to bringing the whole of that great region under the rule of one strong hand. On the chances of that result being accomplished even by such a force as Sir Samuel Baker already possesses, and of the great possible consequences to commerce and civilisation, we spoke in detail a few weeks ago; and a good deal that has been written in various quarters since goes to confirm the hope that the thing will be done, and that it will be found a good thing when it is done. That the Viceroy of Egypt has confidence in Baker's success, and that he intends to lose no time in reaping the fruits of that success, may be seen in the fact that he has already entered on measures for the canalising of the Nile cataracts, some of which are beyond his own present dominions, by which a water-way for commerce will be opened up through 1400 miles of rich and enrichable territory.

The question naturally arises, whether the nature and results of the existing system of government in Egypt are such as to render hopeful or desirable its extension to other territories. To this question two sufficient answers might be given off-hand. No system of government or mis-government could possibly be worse—the Egyptian system is incomparably better—than that which exists throughout the Equatorial basin of the Nile. The results of the existing Egyptian system have beyond all question been greatly beneficial to the world, or at least to the Western world, in all its interests; in its external relations, the Egyptian Government—under not only the present Viceroy, but his three predecessors—has shown wisdom, enlightenment, and magnanimity far above the policy throughout the same period of more than three or four of the Powers of Europe. Of course, much more might be said about and something against the Egyptian Government. Undeniably, it is, in relation to its own subjects, a Government of the stick. Nothing is done from persuasion or sense of duty, or even sense of interest; everything is done by force or in fear of it. How far this is in the nature of the people, how far in the bad teaching or maltreatment of the Government, is not an easy question. Certain it is that the stranger who shrinks from Eastern usages, and thinks to make his way or get fair-play by persuasion and kindness, finds, in all but decidedly exceptional cases, that he is concluded to be weak both of mind and body, and that he is treated accordingly. Treat an Arab with kindness, even accompanied by good pay, and, a hundred to one, he laughs at and cheats you; treat him like a beast of burden, curse his father and

mother, and kick himself, and he repays you, not only in obedience, but in real respect, and even a sort of affection. The donkeys are no better than the men—pat them once, and they decline to take further trouble; pat them again, and they kick you off; thump them, and they move on; thump them harder, and they move on merrily. It would be very depressing to admit that all this is natural and irremediable—that there is no removable cause and no available help for it. But, before all the blame is laid on the Egyptian system of government, let the fact be looked at that the same miserable state of things exists among the same races wherever they are planted, and by whomsoever they are ruled, whether by foreign conquerors or by rulers of their own race and choice. In such and similar things, there may, there must, be a better time coming, but it is as likely to come through the extension of Egyptian dominion as through any other means that seem within reach.

The results, too, of Egyptian rule, though not so favourable internally as externally, have not been wholly evil. The civilising process in Egypt has to a large extent been forced and superficial, but it is not clear that it was within the power of man to civilise at all in any other way. It is easy to suggest improvements—stones would have been better employed in paving the streets than in building palaces; but, even in such a case, it is doubtful which expenditure would have most gratified the Egyptian people themselves. And some at least of those classes who have not been morally affected, have been materially benefited. There is no reason to doubt that

the town population of Egypt—the shopkeepers and artificers, the former much richer, the latter much more numerous and skilful, than is generally supposed—have had their condition much improved by the changes which the Government has long and energetically been forcing upon the community. Agriculture also has undergone rapid and real improvement ; there has been a great increase in production, and a much better choice or distribution of products, both under the guidance or compulsion of the Government. The doubt is whether the condition of the agriculturist or “fellah” has also been improved. He produces more, but he also pays more and he works no less, than before. It can, however, safely be said that his condition has not deteriorated ; it was impossible that he could have been poorer or harder worked than he always had been, and the net result of careful inquiries is that, within the last twenty or thirty years, he has been perceptibly, though far from proportionally, bettered. That the results have not been more favourable to the mass of the agricultural population may, however, be argued to be due not so much to the political as to the social or economical system under which they live. The system of land tenure in Egypt is very like what exists in Ireland, and still liker what Mr Bright and others have proposed to introduce into Ireland. The tenants or cultivators have fixity of tenure and even hereditary succession ; they divide and subdivide their occupancies pretty much as they please ; the holdings are very small ; the rents are collected by a class of middle men ; and most of the land belongs more or less absolutely to the State, according to the arrangement which Joseph



made in Egypt long ago, and which Mr Bright would make in Ireland now, or at least would have made three years ago. It will be remembered that Joseph, taking what seems to Christian eyes a rather unhandsome advantage of the famine, effected an arrangement by which, in consideration of corn for their immediate necessities, the people of Egypt made Pharaoh their landlord or feudal superior for ever. It is added, "And as for the people, he removed them to cities from one end of the borders of Egypt even to the other end thereof"—precisely the arrangement which is made matter of denunciation by modern writers on such questions as "Highland depopulation." But, however it came about, and whether it came about rightly or wrongly, the fact is, that in Egypt at this day the Government is, generally speaking, the lord of the soil, very much as Mr Bright has proposed that it should be in Ireland. The results are not encouraging, even though the circumstances are exceptionally favourable. The Egyptian cultivator can take four crops off his ground in one year, and has profitable employment every day and all day; but he is no better off—if possible, worse—than the Irish cultivator, who can scarcely get one crop, and cannot employ half his time. That, however, is a state of things which the present dynasty of Egypt found and did not make; which it has not made worse; and which is both better, and more accessible to amelioration, than the condition of the people in similar and neighbouring countries, likely soon to be brought under that Egyptian rule which, though it has often done wrongly and always roughly, has on the whole been the agent of order and progress.

